Mark Rappaport

The Autobiography of PIER PAOLO PASOLINI

Porcile is one of the most problematic of Pasolini's films. Reviled by critics at the time it was first released, quick on the heels of perhaps his greatest success till that time, the worldwide *succès de scandale*, *Teorema*, it was shunned by audiences as well. Now, over 30 years later, not only is *Porcile* (*Pig Pen*) not as awful as its harshest critics claimed, but it even has a great deal in common with *Teorema*, and also points the way to *Salò*. What joins *Porcile* to these bookends of Pasolini's later period is the allegorical nature of all three works. These films do not deal in psychology or character, plot, dialogue or even acting. Instead, they deal with relatively static, non-dramatic situations that must work themselves out in tableaux, rather than using a succession of dramatic scenes, in order for the meaning to be revealed, if it ever is. Even the so-called characters are types who don't have names. One is called "The Visitor," in *Teorema*, and even though The Wife, The Husband, The Daughter and so on, in the same film, have names, they are generally referred to by their attributes. In *Salò* they are called "The Bishop," "The Professor," etc. In fact, *any* of these three films could easily have been called *Teorema*. They are theorems whose proposition is fully stated, if not clearly understood, by the time the film is over.

Allegory is inimical to the demands of cinema, which, by its very nature, creates open meanings and ambiguities, and invites a variety of interpretations. The generous, almost overwhelming density of the visual image makes itself available to multiple meanings, whereas allegory can only permit a limited range of interpretations, proscribed by the author's intent. Allegory is too rigid a construct to accommodate the specificity, as well as very personal quality, of individuals *or* the realistic details of locations that can only contradict the universality and abstraction an allegory strives to achieve. And even though one can think of many films (or parts of films) that engage in symbolism and metaphor to achieve their ultimate meaning, aside from the Pasolini films, it's very hard to think of other examples of allegory in the cinema—other than, perhaps, Eastern European films and especially Eastern European animation during the Communist years, which, in an attempt to camouflage their true meanings from repressive government authorities, give themselves over to this most literary of concepts. Beckett describes allegory as "that glorious double-entry, with every credit in the said account a debit in the meant, and inversely." I understand this to mean that the more that an internal meaning is talked about, the less of it there is and that such meaning can only be contained in what is left unsaid. The knockout punch is, of course, "and inversely." Clearly, dabbling in allegory is a very tricky balancing act not meant for amateurs and which cannot be performed casually or at will.

However, Walter Benjamin prophetically, at least in the case of Pasolini, observes that allegory is exactly the right mode for an age of commodities. When Pasolini says, regarding *Teorema*, *Porcile* and, undoubtedly, *Salò*, he wanted to make a cinema that was "unconsumable"—certainly a witty pun, since *Porcile*, among other things, concerns itself with that which should not and ought not be consumed—perhaps he was echoing Benjamin's observation. In Pasolini's words, "[*Teorema* and *Porcile*] remain undigested or—even more the case—undigestible: Their consumers put them in their mouths and then spit them out, or they pass the night with a bellyache." In other words, even though, when he was making films, he was working in a relatively expensive medium, ostensibly making mass-market entertainment, he consciously wanted to turn those films into non-commodities. This is especially true of *Salò*, made several years later.

If allegory is better read than seen and better seen on stage than on film, it becomes clear in his influential 1965 essay, "The Cinema of Poetry," why Pasolini, the

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I AM CERTAIN that someone will ask me, "Is this (*Porcile*) an autobiographical film?" All right, I'll say "yes" to whomever asks me this question. The film is autobiographical to the extent that my autobiography has enabled me to understand this horror and to expound it with distance and also humor. . . . The film is autobiographical for the following reasons: first, I identify in part with the character of Pierre Clementi (apocalyptic anarchy, and—let us say—total contestation in the existential plane); second, I identify with Jean-Pierre Léaud (eaten by pigs, cannibalized rather than a cannibal)—ambiguity, fleeting identity, and everything which the boy says in that long monologue to his girlfriend who then leaves.

—from Pasolini's notes on *Porcile*, read by Alberto Moravia, in Pasolini's absence, at the first public screening of the film at the Venice Film Festival in 1969.

Pierre Clementi contemplates the results of cannibalism in Pasolini's *Porcile*.

poet, is comfortable with such an unyielding format. Film, unlike language, he says, does not have a codified language, a grammar, a clearly defined syntax, and is more effective as an oneiric vision than as a medium for conveying complex ideas. Literature, which, of course, is his first love, and which is bound by the strictures and structures of hundreds of years of linguistic rules, is a more congenial medium for him, and especially the ideas he is interested in, particularly in these three films.

Although Kafka's works, in an Eastern European mode before the fact, are not exactly allegories—they are *sui generis*, in some world of their own—not unlike Pasolini's allegories; the personages involved, perform various functions which only serve the larger idea. For me, the literary pleasures that Kafka's works offer on the page greatly outweigh the result of repeated attempts to adapt them both to stage and film, which can only be doomed to failure. The paucity of description that he attributes to his "characters" or to put it another way, the people who perform a variety of activities, because, again, they are hardly characters in the traditional sense of Western literature, can only work against actors who, after all, *do* have faces. The fully fleshed out presence of real actors robs the work of Kafka's hard-earned mysteries and specific non-specificity by intruding their familiar and idiosyncratic presence into a work where characters, by intentional design, are stripped of any special characteristics. Better to perform Kafka with ski masks or nylon stockings over the participant's faces. It would be much truer to the original. Perhaps the ideal solution to translating Kafka into another medium would be to have the works done as puppet theater, with a single mold used to stamp all the puppet's faces.

But Pasolini, in his allegories, uses a completely different strategy. Since he is not offering his actors interesting characters to play, or psychologically or emotionally complex roles, or, very often, even dialogue, he populates his films with brand-name stars or personalities who bring with them their own inevitable associations beyond the personages they play and fleshes them out as such, a strategy he has used ever since *Mamma Roma*. Just because he is an art-film director doesn't mean that he wasn't a bit of a showman as well, or blind to the nature and demands of the box-office. In *Teorema*, he offers us the spectacle of Silvana Mangano, not because she starred as Jocasta in his *Edipo Re*, but because she was the star of *Bitter Rice* (1948) and *Anna* (1951), the late and decadent neo-realist international hits, as well as the star of her husband Dino de Laurentis' films designed expressly for her as star vehicles. Similarly, he casts Massimo Girotti, a star of Italian cinema—ever since, as a young man of 24, he appeared in Visconti's *Ossessione* (1942)—and a fixture of Italian historical films as well as literary adaptations throughout the 40s and 50s, for his place in Italian film history. Terence Stamp is on board as the mysterious stranger because of his recent hits and successes in, *The Collector*, *Billy Budd*, and *Modesty Blaise*, as well as his unthreateningly stunning androgynous beauty. (Originally, Pasolini wanted Lee Van Cleef, but he wouldn't accept the salary that was offered. What a stroke of luck for Pasolini! Imagine The Visitor, a creature of angelic polymorphously perverse sexuality being played by Van Cleef, a creature more suited to polymorphously perverse cruelty. It's one of those good fortunes in casting that fill the annals of film history. Like Mae West and Montgomery Clift turning down *Sunset Boulevard*, like Jean-Louis Trintignant and Dominique Sanda not doing *Last Tango in Paris*, like the sublime Lee Remick replacing the stolid Lana Turner in *Anatomy of a Murder*, like James Coburn, again for monetary reasons, declining to be in *For a Fistful of Dollars*.)

Mangano's and Girotti's daughter is played by Anne Wiazemsky, who had recently been in Bresson's *Au Hazard Balthazar* (1966), as well as in Godard's *La Chinoise* (1967) and *Weekend* (1967). Wiazemsky earns additional points for immeasurable cultural cachet for having been Godard's wife at the time, as well as being François Mauriac's granddaughter. The cast is rounded out by Laura Betti, experimental theatre actress and singer, and, on the more familial level, Ninetto Davoli, Pasolini's discovery *and* love of his life, and Susanna Pasolini, his mother. This is a combination he will use again and again in his allegories—a mixture of established stars and/or personalities as well as, harking back to his neo-realist roots, using ordinary people for who they are and what their faces suggest rather than what they have come to mean over time, in a succession of films, to moviegoers. In *Salò*, Elsa di Giorgio and Caterina Borato have special resonance for Italian audiences of a certain age, both having starred in films during the Mussolini years. And all of the victims, of course, are young untried amateurs. Stars mingling with *ragazzi*, intellectuals hobnobbing with people plucked off the streets.

In *Porcile*, the mix is somewhat similar to that in *Teorema*—genuine stars, art-film stars, and found objects. Pierre Clementi, recently in Buñuel's *Belle de Jour* (1967) and *La Voie lactée* (1968) and, even further back, one of Burt Lancaster's sons in Visconti's *The Leopard* (1962), with his skull-beneath-the-skin face was born, if for no other reason than his looks, to

Sylvana Mangano as The Wife in *Teorema*.

play the cannibal. His cohort in cannibalism is Franco Citti, Pasolini's alter ego, the non-actor actor, the pimp in both *Accatone* and *Mamma Roma*, as well as Oedipus in *Edipo Re*. Also in the film—Jean-Pierre Léaud, icon of the New Wave, Anne Wiazemsky again, plus Ugo Tognazzi, star of dozens of Italian comedies playing a not-quite reconstructed Nazi, and Marco Ferreri, the well-known film director, and, of course, Ninetto Davoli.

Porcile was originally written as a play, "Orgia," along with five other plays while Pasolini was in the hospital for a short time recuperating from an ulcer. The film comprises two distinct and separate stories that seem to have no relation to each other. One takes place in early Christian times and concerns a cannibal, then a group of cannibals, living on the side of a smoldering volcano. The other involves an industrialist, Klotz, in West Germany who makes an unholy but very profitable alliance with a former vilified Nazi who reaps the benefits of his new-found anonymity as a result of plastic surgery and a name change. The current day industrialist is able to get the upper hand over his partner because of the partner's well-known experiments with Jews during the war. However, the former Nazi, Herd, levels the playing field when he is advised that Julian (Léaud), the peculiar, neurasthenic son of Klotz,

a young Hamlet-type who can't commit himself to a young woman who loves him (Wiazemsky), who can't commit to any kind of political action—it is 1968—is the victim of his own unspeakable obsessions.

The stylistic differences between the two episodes are striking and underlined. The cannibal section is virtually wordless, has breathtaking landscapes shot on the side of Mount Etna, and depicts an era in which Christianity has not yet completely vanquished pagan customs and beliefs. The German section is shot very formally in an Italianate villa (in Italy, actually) which looks like a museum, each shot carefully and frontally framed as if it were a museum-worthy still photograph. The editing, reinforcing a frozen academicism, cuts to each actor as he or she speaks. No overlapping dialogue, no standard shot-reverse shot. The dialogue, pointedly *not* psychological, is aphoristic and brittle. Never do the two sections interlock, although at one point, very early in the film, Clementi, sitting on the side of a mountain, looks at something in the distance. There is a cut to the villa, suggesting that they occupy a contiguous space. But aside from this, the two sections never collide, intersect, or intrude on each other's separateness. Ninetto Davoli, playing one of the villagers who watches the cannibals being punished, is also the man who, in the very next scene, brings the Nazi the news of the demise of Klotz' son, Julian. Aside from the fact that both parts are played by the same person, the texts don't cross over. Davoli, the actor, is in effect the sole link between the two stories, the witness in one and the annunciator in the other.

If there is any way that the two stories bear on each other, it is in their reliance on the "punchline," which is supposed to throw all that happened earlier into high relief and make what is cloudy clear. In the cannibal episode, when Clementi is captured and offered a crucifix to kiss before his death, he defiantly proclaims his credo, over and over again, as if it is an incantation he is uttering, "I killed my father, I have eaten human flesh, and I tremble with joy." The corresponding punchline in the German episode is the revelation of Julian's shameful secret, the reason, ostensibly, for his inability to love Ida, and his refusal to become involved in political activity. He had "relations" with the pigs on his father's estate, and then was devoured by them, with not a shred of clothing left of him, not even a button remaining. Even though we see, once again, in a very formal shot, the pig stalls, Pasolini withholds the climactic moment of Julian being devoured (one can be sure that Ken Russell would never have been so discreet), a modesty that will fall by the wayside when he makes *Salò*. When the Nazi hears this story he puts his finger to his lips and says "Shhh! Not a word to anyone." An invitation to silence and keeping secrets? Or, perhaps he has found the information necessary to gain the upper hand in the business he and Julian's father have started. Having a pig-fucker for a son is just possibly a little more damning in the business and social worlds than having been a former Nazi, especially in a society which abhors sexuality, and, most especially, deviant ones.

Pierre Clementi in *Porcile*.

If both parts of the film end in parallel revelations, one thing is quite clear. Both deal in secrets and taboos that cannot and must not be practiced or even mentioned. In a sense, both stories that have nothing in common with each other rely on the revelation of a secret and/or confession to clarify all that has come previously. Or is the point of the film that all society is partially structured around the taboos and secrets that everyone silently understands and must never be mentioned *or* acted upon? But the transgressors, the rebels, the outcasts are, nonetheless, necessary to help society run more efficiently, if for no other reason than

to help it unite against their aberrant and unwanted behavior. The devouring and the devoured must be expunged and all traces of them and even memories of them must be erased.

But while *Porcile* depicts contradictions in society through allegory, it also reveals something peculiar to Pasolini, especially in light of his admission that the film is autobiographical. Now, autobiography is not an unfamiliar element in Pasolini's films. What can you say about a man who has his own mother play the Virgin Mary in the story of Christ? He has already said it. Or about a man who uses has his own mother's dresses as the designs for the dresses Jocasta is to wear in the modern section of his version of *Edipo Re*, which is autobiographical in many other ways as well. For example, there is the blinded and bitter Oedipus relying on the ever-cheerful, unfazed and unflappable Ninetto to be his guide when he is exiled from the world beyond Thebes to the modern world of the sighted.

Even though Pasolini was more than open about his homosexuality—in fact, in real life he flaunted it and rubbed people's noses in it—he rarely deals with it in his films. The two "secrets," "I killed my father, I have eaten human flesh, and I tremble with joy" and the young man whose secret pleasure is pig-fucking (it is not referred to quite as explicitly as that in the film) are both hideous taboos, the unutterable, the unmentionable, and above all, the socially unacceptable—very much like homosexuality itself.

Lest it be suggested that Pasolini suffered from an Oedipus complex, he himself clarifies, "I have certainly never dreamed that I was making love to my mother . . . If anything, I have dreamed rather of making love to my father against the chest of drawers (in the wretched little bedroom my brother and I shared) and perhaps to my brother as well." Well, if sleeping with your mother is the greatest taboo, sleeping with your father is such an enormous taboo that it's not even mentioned as such. It's *so* far off the radar, no one thought to include that restriction among the things that dare not be done, since homosexuality, by itself, is considered enough of a taboo not to include any extracurricular variations on the subject. Can this be what our young cannibal as Pasolini, apocalyptic anarchist, shies away from when he says, "I killed my father"? In a sense, killing one's father, even though frowned upon, is still a culturally-approved referent. So, in a sense, the "taboo-ness" has been sanctioned by classical literature, if not exactly popular acceptance, by one of the most famous plays ever written and reinforced by Freud as an archetypal neurosis. It's almost a cliché. *Sleeping* with your father is another story. Not classical. Not acceptable. Anytime, anywhere. No fancy Freudian theories ennobling it and at the same time rendering it commonplace. Perhaps it is *this* unspoken taboo that Pasolini really alludes to—a genuine taboo, to the *n*th power. The things that still cannot be said out loud, except to a few close friends, *maybe*—and obviously, if you're a world-famous writer, to your reading public.

As for cannibalism, in Godard's *Weekend*, only a year earlier, when he had members of the French middle classes-as-hippies casually dip into a steaming cauldron of human parts, as if it were a completely natural thing to do, it was, if not shocking, certainly much more pointed. It has political relevance. That *is* what the middle classes do; they devour everyone and everything that's not nailed down. And it's quite matter of fact, too. There is not the slightest whiff of transgressive nostalgia or pride in transgression hanging about it, both of which tinge *Porcile*.

As for the young man who fucks pigs, so much is made of his "secret," the secret when ultimately revealed becomes anti-climactic, as almost any secret must. Julian says to Ida, "I'd like to be an SS man, to kill you with my secret." But the secrets that dare not be revealed, the taboos that dare not be uttered, much less imagined, are all too easily understood and absorbed, certainly at the time when the film was made. Perhaps much less so at the time Pasolini was a young man. If the two reflecting but dissimilar stories in *Porcile* are read as allegories of closetedness, secrets that dare not be told, practices and desires that dare not be acted upon, their meanings and the element of autobiography Pasolini refers to also become clearer.

In Julian's farewell monologue to Ida, which Pasolini says he identifies with (and, of course, wrote), Julian says:

> How huge and strange my love is. I can't tell whom I love. It's of no interest. Never has an amorous passion been so base. What matters are its phenomena. The profound deformity it causes in me is not degenerate . . . These phenomena are so beautiful, so thrilling that I can't dispel them, not even in thought. It's not something that happens at birth, with growing. There is nothing *natural* about it. Hence, I think of it always. The phenomena this love produces in me are a grace that has struck me like the plague. Don't be amazed if, with the anguish, there is a constant infinite gaiety. . . .

I think I am safe in saying this is not the confession of a man who fucks pigs but of a man who is so ashamed

that the pleasure he finds in his own sexuality is regarded with such contempt and scorn by others, that he incorporates their hatred for his perversity, even in his affirmation of it.

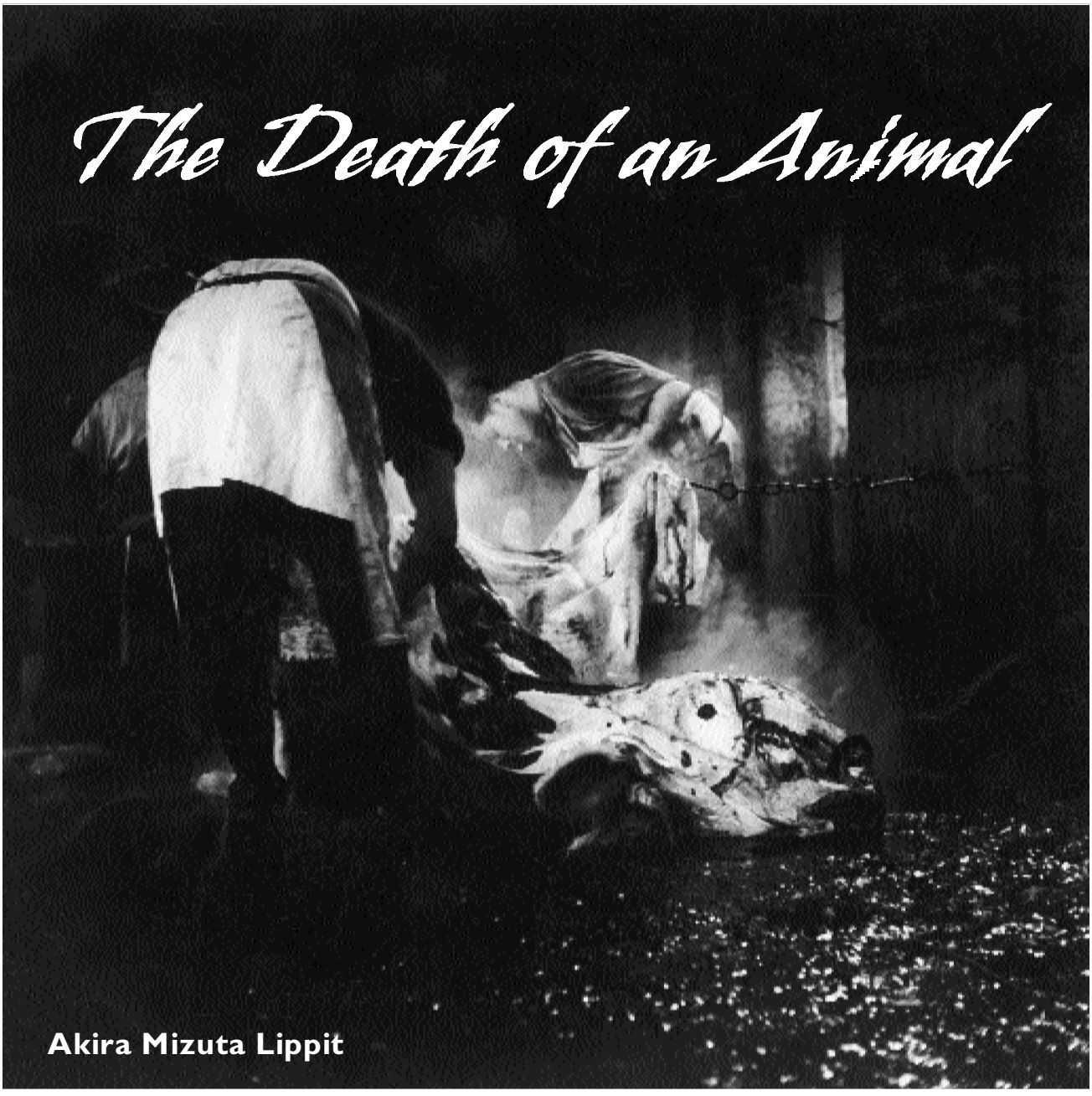
Pasolini relates, he says, equally to Clementi's posture and to Léaud's secret desires. But when Pasolini says he identifies with Léaud "eaten by pigs, cannibalized rather than cannibalizing," he is being somewhat disingenuous and romantic. After all, it is Léaud who brutalizes the pigs. Theirs is not a conscious decision, an act of revenge, or an expression of forbidden desire. Furthermore, Léaud is not "cannibalized." He is devoured by animals that resort to instinctual behavior. It is *they* who have been violated. The emphasis on the double secret which attempts to explain all that came before it, is Pasolini's strangely bashful and ultimately timid confession in a world that, in the late twentieth century, has seen much more horrible things than cannibalism and recreational pig-fucking. If we situate the film much earlier in Pasolini's life, certainly before the atrocities of World War II were more fully revealed, the proudly defiant confession and the different varieties of transgressive posturing help the film achieve a greater resonance as well as clarity. It adds a double meaning to Tognazzi's imprecation in the very last shot of the film, when he is informed of Julian's unusual death—"Shhh! Not a word to anyone." He looks directly into the camera when he says it. It's both a warning *and* a plea to maintain the silence that holds society together and condemns the outcast. Certain things must not and should not be spoken of. Nor should they be forgotten.

In light of Pasolini's death a mere six years later, Léaud's death by predatory animals turning on their prey suggests an eerie prescience. However, for more terrifying, unguarded, and more tragic, up-front autobiography, we will have to wait for *Salò*, six years and a lifetime away.

Film Quarterly congratulates Miriam Bratu Hansen on winning the 2001 Katherine Singer Kovacs Essay Award for "Fallen Women, Rising Stars, New Horizons: Shanghai Silent Film as Vernacular Modernism," which appeared in *FQ* vol. 54, no. 1 (Fall 2000).

Mark Rappaport is a filmmaker whose films include *Rock Hudson's Home Movies* (1992), *From the Journals of Jean Seberg* (1995), and *The Silver Screen/Color Me Lavender* (1998). Last year he wrote a script about the last months of Pasolini's life, *Pasolini's Next Film*.

The Death of an Animal



Akira Mizuta Lippit

An Animal Writes—

No animal was harmed in the making of this film. Appended to films in which animals (including fish and sometimes insects) appear to have been injured or killed, the American Humane Association's (AHA) sanctioned disclaimer underscores the persuasive impression of reality in cinema and its effect on the representation of violence.[1] Its purpose is to reassure audiences that despite the semblance of violence, no harm has been inflicted on any animal in the actual world *outside of the film*, and to protect distributors from legal claims. Cinematic realism, the disclaimer suggests, is not contiguous with outside reality. An outside agency, the AHA provides a vigilant assurance that the world within a film, *this film*, is not what it seems. Although its autonomy has been questioned, the AHA is meant to serve as an independent outside body that determines with its sanction the precise border between the inside and outside of the film. "No animal was harmed" occupies this very borderline. The AHA disclaimer inscribes onto the film an ethical spectatorship

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that protects, as it were, the interior, diegetic dimension of the film from the outside world.

"No animal was harmed" thus divides the film's interior and exterior dimensions, distinguishing the worlds within and without the film, fiction from fact. On the inside animals appear to be harmed; on the outside they are protected. As a film nears its end and the credit sequence begins, films that have depicted violence against animals disavow—in those final moments of the film, at the threshold of the diegesis—that violence against animals.[2] "No animal was harmed" marks the intervention of a linguistic phrase that attempts to frame the picture and limit the responsibility of the film and its fictions. *It states*, as it were, for the animal that cannot speak, that cannot defend its rights. A kind of animal right, or writing. The disclaimer and entire credit sequence signal the return of the film to the order of language. It functions as a *parergon*, a frame that surrounds and defines the film. Using a spatial logic peculiar to frames, the parergon occurs both inside and outside of the film, and serves as a transition for the spectator from the world of cinema—which is also, but not exclusively, linguistic—to the world of language.

"A parergon," says Jacques Derrida, "comes against, beside, and in addition to the *ergon*, the work done [*fait*], the fact [*le fait*], the work, but it does not fall to one side, it touches and cooperates within the operation, from a certain outside."[3] The parergon frames the work, translates it, renders it—in the case of films—as language. A language contaminated, however, by the very fact that it touches the work from the unique topology of "a certain outside." Photographic arts inflict, according to Francis Bacon, a specific brutality, a "slight remove from fact," that returns the viewer "onto the fact more violently."[4] The fact opens onto a vast exteriority, and photography and film bring that exteriority closer by framing (the slight remove of) violence. Bacon, whose work also features an element of animal violence, suggests that the photograph's slight displacement from reality enhances the impression of a violent reality. The parergon establishes such a remove. It opens an interstice between the inside and outside, part of neither, in contact with both. At once imaginary and material, the parergon implements an economy of reality that is based neither in fact nor language, but in the phantasm of their contact. A chimerical hybrid, the parergon consists of flesh and words that converge, in this case, on the figure of the animal, coming "against, beside, and in addition" to it.

The parergonal inscription, which is not linguistic, not yet or no longer only a language, renders ethics as a *zoon*, a *zoologos*, a living language bound by an intimate relation to animality. Derrida has called the peculiar relation of language to animality "*l'animot*." The term embodies, for Derrida, a critique of the uses of the animal in language, ethics, and philosophy. In "L'animal que donc je suis," Derrida writes:

> Interpretative decisions (in all their metaphysical, ethical, juridical and political consequences) thus depend on what is presupposed by the general singular of this word *Animal*; I was tempted, at a given moment, in order to indicate the direction of my thinking, not just to keep this word within quotation marks, as if it were a citation to be analyzed, but without further ado to change the word, indicating clearly thereby that it is indeed a matter of a word, only a word, the word "animal" [*du mot "animal"*], and to forge another word in the singular, at the same time close but radically foreign, a chimerical word that sounded as though it contravened the laws of the French language, *l'animot*.[5]

The difference between *animaux* and *animot* operates only in the visual, graphic, and written domain of language, but when spoken, that difference vanishes into the sonic fusion of homonymy. Derrida's term registers the break between singular and plural uses of the animal as word, but also between image and sound, flesh and word, language and its wild side. Like the multiplicities that are said to roam within the animal, the *animot* carries a multiplicity within a singularity, a multilingual and *anagrammatical* chaos within its grammar.[6] As Derrida suggests, an outlaw word that breaks the laws of language (French), outside the law of language.

"No animal was harmed" is a type of *animot*, a singular/plural phrase that legislates the fantasy of animal death while disclaiming that no animal in the world outside of the film was harmed. (No *real* animal, no animal that inhabits the planes of the real, was harmed.) The *animot* situates the boundaries between the inside and outside worlds in the form of a word that is at once animal and non-animal. A language of the outside. Derrida's notion of the *animot* can also be thought of as an *animetaphor*—a trope of animality that is itself profoundly anti-metaphoric and *anatropic*; that exposes the impossibility of a rhetorical relation between animality and language.[7]

The animal disclaimer illuminates the anxiety that the apparent injury of an animal provokes, especially in dramatic narrative films, where the effects of reality

are, perhaps ironically, strongest. The differing modes of realism in narrative and documentary films offer a striking contrast in the treatment of animal death, requiring, in the case of fiction film, a legal disclaimer or frame that separates the work form the world. Prompted by a long history of filmmaking in which animals were regularly wounded and sometimes killed during production, the disclaimer acknowledges both the frequency of violent representations and the advances in film technologies that have made the staging of actual violence unnecessary. The phrase performs a legal function, protecting the distributor from claims of unnecessary cruelty toward animals. "No animal was harmed" also serves a taxonomic purpose, separating the two principal film genres, fiction and documentary.

The disclaimer, applied to dramatic films that have passed the AHA review, does not regularly appear in those films—nature films, for example—where the seemingly reliable status of reality has been foregrounded. Frederick Wiseman's institutional animal films, *Primate* (1974) and *Zoo* (1993), are two such examples, as are numerous wildlife documentaries and TV programs. Those documentary works, which display violence against animals by people as well as other animals, derive their value from the strict adherence to actuality, from the premise that animals *have* been harmed in the making of the film. Beyond a discomfort with the histories and genres of film, the disclaimer also reveals a totemic anxiety, one that surpasses the humanitarian concern for animals as living creatures and exposes a unique unease with the death of the animal as spectacle and as such.

What is the difference, if any, between killing animals and human beings? Do different ethics of representation guide those two forms of violence? No comparable disclaimer appears for human beings, "no human being was harmed in the making of this film."[8] If film audiences need to be reassured that no animals were harmed, why aren't similar reassurances applied to human beings who appear to have been wounded or killed, since violence against human beings occurs far more frequently in the mainstream narrative cinema? The human counterpart to this disclaimer assumes a different form: "All resemblances to persons living or deceased is purely coincidental." Different taboos seem to restrict animal and human representation: animals cannot be harmed, individual human beings resembled. The injunction against copying the human form, especially in the era of mechanical reproduction (from automata to photography), is familiar, and has been well documented in the anecdotal histories of photography and film. In addition to its legal purpose, again to preclude charges of endangerment and abuse, the human disclaimer suggests a trace of religious or irrational anxiety, a fear of the double, *doppelgänger*, or mirror reflection, what in psychoanalysis is sometimes called "spectrophobia." Through a logic made possible by psychoanalysis the two taboos—copying human beings and killing animals—can be said to form an integrated system. Copying the human figure amounts to a form of killing if it is seen as eliminating the singularity thought to establish human identity. Killing a particular animal suggests that animal's individuality, disturbing the frequent representation of animals as constituting packs or hordes. The two modes of violation are linked by the singularity ascribed to humanity and the multiplicity that is said to determine animality. Taking this logic one step further, to imitate another human being is to assail that individual's singularity and force it to become, like an animal, multiple; to kill an individual animal is to grant it singularity, allowing it to become unique, to become-human. The two disclaimers share a structural disposition as linguistic phrases appended to films in the supplemental credit sequence, where a film's debts are acknowledged. Both phrases determine—following another etymology of the word "credit"—systems of belief, even faith. Both ward off an anxiety produced by a film—embodied not just in its content or narrative, but by its uncanny materiality that drives the spectator outside of language toward an experience of ecstasy, of standing outside, of brief psychosis. Death, mimesis, ecstasy, psychosis, and spectacle are some of the *animots* that converge upon the animal and human figures inscribed on the parergon.[9]

Another specter haunts the representation of violence against animals, especially violence that leads to death. According to a logic peculiar to Western thought from Epicurus to Heidegger, animals are incapable of a proper death. That is, because animals are said to have no knowledge of death as such, they simply perish without experiencing death as death.[10] There is no death, according to this belief, proper to the animal. Georges Bataille offers this summary: "What marks us [humanity] so severely is the *knowledge* of death, which animals fear but do not *know*."[11] For those who hold to this view, the inability of animals to know death follows from the perceived absence of language among animals. Language brings consciousness and with it, the consciousness of consciousness and its absence, or death. In this light, to have language is to have death. Without language, according to this sophism, animals have neither consciousness nor death. It should be stated definitively, as many have tried to do, that animals do have language. Philosophical conceptions of

language, linked to untenable notions of subjectivity, consciousness, and self, have failed to accommodate the language of animals as language. Perhaps this is what Derrida means by *animot*, an expansion of language, an outside language, parergonal, which speaks from the place of an irreducible exteriority.

Another place that opens from the exteriority of language can be found in the topoi of cinema, which, like the animal, complicate the economies of death. There is no proper death of the animal and no death as such in cinema. Both media haunted by the shadow of death and the absence of language, stake a space beyond the conventions of language and death. The death of an animal on film is thus an impossible spectacle—speculative and spectral, linked to cinema through the magical process of animation. Against the impossibility of animal death, cinema provides artificial life, anima, animation, and the possibility of reanimation. Film, perhaps the emblematic technology of the late nineteenth century, keeps animals from ever truly dying by reproducing each individual animal death in a fantastic crypt. It multiplies and repeats each unique death until its singularity has been erased, its beginning and end fused into a spectral loop. Cinema reconciles the paradox of animal death (animals die but are incapable of death) through a fantasy of reanimation, projected into and then outward from the apparatus.[12]

A fantasy machine. As a machine, cinema provides not only a spectacle but also a vehicle for projection. Defined by Jean Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis as an "operation whereby qualities, feelings, wishes, or even objects, which the subject refuses to recognize or rejects in himself, are expelled from the self and located in another person or thing," projection can be seen as a mechanism that neutralizes the dilemma of animal death.[13] Thus, cinematic projection was sutured to a form of cultural projection that posited an animal ontology in the spaces and frames of film. From its inception cinema projected life and vitality—the principle of animation—and assumed from early on the role of a fantastic technological zoo. Two modes of projection, filmic and psychic, bind cinema to animals, technology to life. Hervé Aubron argues for the inherent relationship of cinema to the animal, linked historically to postindustrial spectacles. "The animal inevitably questions the origins of cinema because the animal was its first model. But also because cinema was fused with animals in its earliest stages." The rapid proliferation of zoological parks and fairs in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries coincided with industrialization and the advent of cinema. "Imprisoned, exhibited, trained (and sometimes even staged) for public viewing, the animal and the animated image appear to form two contemporary spectacles." [14] At the end of the twentieth century, Temple Grandin linked animality to visual thinking, to the capacity to "think in pictures."[15] Grandin's animal visuality and cinematography—*cinemality*—led her to the slaughterhouse to implement a mode of killing animals she calls "humane slaughter." In a more speculative register, the animal inhabits cinema through its principal mechanism, animation—to make move, live, animal.

Electric Animal—

Among the earliest spectacles of film, animal, and electricity stands Thomas Edison's 1903 actuality, *Electrocuting an Elephant*. In an effort to sabotage the development of AC (alternating current) electrical generators, which delivered electricity at a higher voltage and to greater distances than his own DC (direct current) systems, Edison embarked on a campaign to discredit the AC system and its primary proponent, the Westinghouse Electrical and Manufacturing Company. Edison's strategy involved a series of public events in which he and his associates electrocuted stray dogs and cats with AC currents of one thousand volts. Throughout 1887 Edison staged the electrocution of hundreds of animals in West Orange, New Jersey. Edison's campaign was so successful in disseminating the idea of high-tension electricity as a sheer, swift, and lethal agent that the New York State Legislature, in a rare show of bipartisan cooperation, adopted in 1888 "a statute providing for the use of the 'electric chair' in place of hanging as a means of capital punishment."[16] Through a delusional but symptomatic economy, the projection of guilt onto the condemned animals made the progression from animal to human electrocution possible. An ethical phantasm at the base of animal and human murder binds the two modes of electric killing.[17]

Edison's legacy of animal killings is recorded in the one-minute film, *Electrocuting an Elephant*. Filmed at Coney Island's Luna Park, the single-reel "actuality" shows in long shot the electrocution of Topsy, a park elephant that had killed three men. The evocation of the animal's name in accounts of the electrocution served to anthropomorphize the elephant and render it almost human in its criminality. Edison's execution of the criminal animal, explains Lisa Cartwright, "proved to be an attraction almost more popular, and undoubtedly more dramatic, than a docile animal."[18] The film consists of a complex mixture of cinematic elements, including a camera pan and several jump cuts, or tem-

poral lapses. In the opening moments of the film, Topsy is led in shackles to a clearing accompanied by several men. The scene suggests not so much the destruction of an animal as the execution of a criminal. Through a gradual anthropomorphosis, this opening renders the elephant first guilty, then pathetic. Topsy advances from the background to foreground, creating the effect of a zoom; she approaches the camera, which pans to follow her movements, framing her briefly in a close-up. This proximity generates an air of theatricality, a tragi-comic gravity. The film then jump cuts to the camera position that remains largely intact throughout the rest of the film. Topsy is framed in a slight high-angle long shot, a Coney Island marquee visible in the background. She shuffles her feet and surveys the ground with her nose before suddenly tightening. After a moment, smoke erupts from Topsy's feet (which had been placed in special devices that introduced the current into her body) and she falls forward to her right. The camera adjusts slightly, panning left, to center the fallen elephant.

The elephant quivers on the ground as life and movement leave its body. What follows is perhaps the most macabre moment of the film. In what appears to be a temporal lapse, the camera stops, then resumes filming. The interruption is registered by a slight jump cut. When the scene of the dying elephant resumes, a human figure returns with it, fading into the background behind the lifeless elephant's body. As the film ends, this human figure exits to the left. The ghost-like man at the end of the film, who appears in the frame like a Méliès trick, provides a haunting relief, as if the elephant's life had leapt, through an illicit pact, into this human form that appears from nowhere into the diegesis, into the dying world of the animal. A strange image of the afterlife appears in this final scene—a form of elephant survival.[19] It is as if the human being is there to accompany the elephant to the other world, an agent of the transition from one existential state to another. Or, the spirit of the elephant appears to transfer to the man. The human figure hovers on the surface of the shot, never fully absorbed—an ectoplasmic manifestation of the anthropomorphosis that infuses the electrocution. Edison's current, his electrical charge, destroys and reanimates the elephant.

In the span of a minute, the elephant collapses. The moment of death, captured on film, is made visible by the elephant's sudden loss of muscular activity. One sees its animality cease in a moment. That moment of Topsy's death, which would otherwise determine a temporal and existential singularity, is destined in the film to return, inscribed in the very instant of death as a repetition. "The Edison Manufacturing Company must have banked," concludes Cartwright, "on the fact that in 1903 audiences would have paid not only to observe an intervention in the 'regulated activity' of the 'living being' but to study this intervention again and again on film, just as the laboratory scientist might watch just such a film over and over to analyze the execution of 'life.'"[20] Life and death are marked in the film by repetition, a repeatability that renders life and death automatic and electric. Topsy's life and death are dissected in the film, witnessed as an automated look or *autopsy* of the elephant that remains after Topsy's death in the form of the film. The dying animal in Edison's film is survived by the film; Topsy lives on and survives as the film, which transfers the anima of the animal, its life, into a phantom archive, preserving the movement that leaves the elephant in the technology of animation. *Electrocuting an Elephant* signals, early in the history of film, an uncanny transference of life from the animal to film, illuminating in the exchange a spectral metaphysic of technology.

Figuring Animal Death—

While animals can be seen, in a speculative fashion, to fuel film and technology, the apparatus stalls when animals are used as metaphors of film and technology. The frequency of animal figures from Etienne-Jules Marey's and Eadweard Muybridge's pre-cinematic photographs to the animations of Winsor McCay and Walt Disney suggests an affinity between animality and cinema that defies, in the end, figurability.[21] The animal metaphor in film turns out to be most often an animetaphor, a trope that collapses under the surge of an electric semiotic. That is, the figure of the animal disturbs the rhetorical structures of film language. In particular, animals resist metaphorization. Sergei Eisenstein's metaphoric slaughterhouse scene in *Strike* (1924) and the hunting sequence in Jean Renoir's *Rules of the Game* (1939) offer two examples of animal death that problematize the figurative value of such representations. Eisenstein's depiction of class struggle between the forces of capital and those of labor concludes with a massacre. Striking workers are attacked, pursued, and destroyed by armed soldiers, like cattle in a slaughterhouse. And then real cattle appear, lacerating the diegesis with animal figures—actual and metaphorical.[22] As the soldiers eliminate the striking workers, the film audience sees scenes from a slaughterhouse. The final sequence of Eisenstein's film concludes with a trope: the slaughter of the striking workers is like the killing of defenseless animals.

Simile, metaphor, allegory: the worker is like an animal, the assault like a slaughter, the story of capital discovered in the narrative of human-animal relations.

The economy of work, the brutality of labor relations to which Eisenstein alludes in his figure of animal slaughter, is interrupted by animals that take the place of actors who would be, in Eisenstein's estimation, unable to achieve the required degree of realism. Eisenstein explains his decision to move outside of the diegesis by inserting the animal trope in order "to avoid overacting among the extras from the labour exchange 'in the business of dying.'" He wanted "to excise from such a serious scene the falseness that the screen will not tolerate but that is unavoidable in even the most brilliant death scene."[23] Eisenstein concludes his explanation by adding that he sought "to extract the maximum effect of bloody horror." The excess acting, which destroys the realism of the scene through a surfeit of humanity, is supplanted, in Eisenstein's logic by the "bloody horror" of the animal massacre. The fact impresses the brutality more forcefully onto the spectator. The filmed slaughter of animals produces through animetaphor an actuality that cannot be staged or performed. Eisenstein's animals intervene at the limits of representation, here the death of human beings. Those workers "in the business of dying" are unequal to animals in the task of dying on screen; the labor of the worker-actor is better effected by the animals that—reversing the direction of their roles as metaphors—perform in the film *like human beings*. Within the diegesis of *Strike* workers die like animals, outside of it animals perform death like human actors. Eisenstein inserts the documentary footage of animal slaughter to make a rhetorical point—that workers in the factory are treated like cattle. But the actuality of the animal slaughter supercedes the metaphor and imposes from outside the diegesis a taste of death, of the real. Eisenstein's animals are parergonal, never fully inside nor outside the diegesis but against, beside, and in addition to it, surrounding *Strike* with an animetaphorical frame.

The transposed rules and economies of work to play, labor to leisure, also leads, in *Rules of the Game*, to a moment of animal death. The hunting scene in Renoir's film employs the death of the animal, of animals, as a deferred metaphor that folds the narrative into and through itself to the outside, rupturing the tissues of diegetic space with another intervention of documentary footage. During the hunt, the film appears to tear open and encounter, like the members of the hunting party, the radical exteriority and brutality of the outside world. (Renoir's film stages the games that distinguish the classes, the rules that separate inside from outside.) The film's shifts in film stock and lighting signal the intrusion of actuality in the form of a documentary mode. Shots of animal killings, mostly rabbits and pheasants, appear to depict actual killings. Vivian Sobchack describes one distinctive shot of a wounded rabbit twitching before perishing as a "documentary moment" that produces "extratextual knowledge." "The generalized referentiality of the fauna in that film is abruptly transformed by the rabbit's death leap as it is shot, the viewer's extratextual knowledge suddenly positing the rabbit's existence beyond the frame of the fiction into the documentary space of an 'elsewhere' where it lived its rabbit life."[24] The knowledge is extratextual because it enters the film from without, exposing the diegesis to the brutality of the outside (a brutality of the outside that is replicated within the film's diegesis, in the narrative). Following Sobchack's reasoning, the intrusion of another syntax, another mode of cinema, but also of a discernible exteriority, disrupts the fictional space of the film. It underscores the eruption of violence in the game, the hunt, which will eventually take the life of the other outsider, the aviator André Jurieu. Mistaken for another, Jurieu is shot and killed like an animal, according to the poacher Marceau, who witnessed the killing. "He rolled over like an animal, when you're hunting."[25] The extratextuality to which Sobchack refers may originate in the anti-figurative deictics of photography, which, Roland Barthes claims, points without speaking. Extratextuality signals the proximity of another or outside language that speaks in the idiom of an *animot*, as homonymy. The aphasia of the photograph operates according to a hysterical imperative—it sees by conceding language, pointing always toward the outside.

"To die like a rabbit," which implies a meaningless, unconscious death at the hands of a vastly superior force, seems, in *Rules of the Game*, to have lost its metaphorical value in the extratextuality of the scene. The death of the rabbit, as Sobchack concludes, effects a becoming-animal in the sense described by Deleuze and Guattari, that strips the expression of its metaphorical purpose. As a trope, Renoir's slaughter of rabbits, like Eisenstein's scene of slaughter, pierces the figurative language of the expression "to die like a rabbit" by animating the metaphor. It becomes, in *Rules of the Game*, a living, animate metaphor, an animetaphor. To die like a rabbit becomes animetaphorical, actual, in the biomechanical drives of the film world. As Sobchack suggests, to die like a rabbit in Renoir's film is to experience and suffer a surfeit consciousness of

Workers emerge in a pack in *Strike*.

death. To experience the death of the rabbit as an impossible and ecstatic death.

Fable—

As opposed to documentary moments of animal death in narrative films, another type of animal film uses animal figures allegorically throughout the entire work. In the tradition of George Orwell's 1945 *Animal Farm* (animated film version by John Halas, 1955) and countless Disney films that feature animals in parabolic roles, Georges Franju's *Blood of the Beasts* (1949) employs animal figures to convey at least one displaced narrative. Like *Animal Farm* or *Bambi*, for instance, *Blood of the Beasts* suggests a pedagogic subtext, conveyed through and on the animal body. The film's commentary, written by naturalist and pioneer wildlife filmmaker Jean Painlevé, situates the film as an expanded allegory that alludes to French complicity with the Nazi genocide. *Blood of the Beasts* differs from other animal fables in the grisly actuality it depicts. Franju refuses to let the allegorical elements overpower the superficial content of his film, which portrays in documentary form the systems and rituals for the killing of animals in two Parisian slaughterhouses. The film never settles comfortably in one form or another, disinterested documentary or charged allegory.[26]

After a prologue displays the impoverishment and ruin of postwar Paris, the film shifts to the slaughterhouse at Vanves. As the narrator notes, despite the prominent statue of a proud bull on display, the Municipal Slaughterhouse "specializes in the slaughter of horses." Following a brief introduction of the tools of the trade, a horse is brought in for slaughter. Framed in a long shot at eye level, the horse is readied for death. A low angle close-up precedes a swift blow from a spiked apparatus to the horse's head, which flattens the animal onto the slaughterhouse floor. The velocity of the horse's collapse recalls Edison's elephant electrocution. (In contrast to Edison's film, however, which portrays the elephant Topsy as criminal, *Blood of the Beasts* depicts the slaughterhouse workers as indifferent killers.) From a high angle, we see the horse's lips severed, then its throat slit to drain its blood. After the gruesome killing, depicted between shifting high and low perspectives, the horse is dismembered and sorted into parts that will eventually be absorbed, the narrator notes, into an array of commercial products.[27] At the next slaughterhouse, cows and sheep are systematically killed, then dismembered, by whistling and

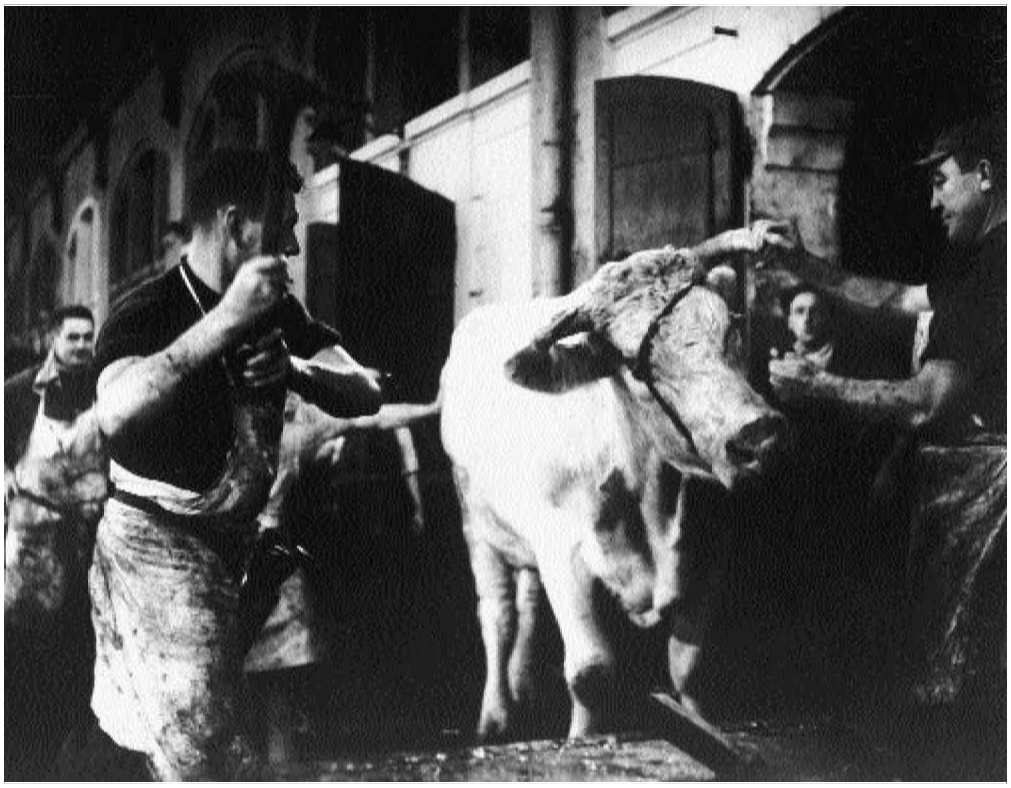
singing workers, a number who have been disfigured from their activities. On the apparent disinterest of the butchers (one of the film's features), Franju and Painlevé quote a passage from Baudelaire, "I will strike thee without anger or hatred, like a butcher."[28] From pathological dispassion to pathologies of passion, the filmed killings of animals—actual and staged—initiate ethical and affective economies specific to the parergonal function of animetaphors.

Outside Animality—

The disjunction of the here and now sustains to a great degree Peter Kubelka's *Our Trip to Africa* (1961-66), which documents an Austrian safari to Kenya and includes numerous animal killings by professors on vacation. At various moments during the film, the hunters enumerate their kills, a hippopotamus, zebra, giraffe, lion . . . most often gunned to death. Among the persistent features of Kubelka's film is the disruption of synchronicity between sound and image. Expected sounds (gunshots, exclamations, human and animal voices) miss their cues and adhere instead to images that displace the film always outside of the natural orders it appears to depict. Film is remarkable, according to Kubelka, precisely for its ability to separate sounds from their sources, to disrupt the synchronicity of sounds and images. It works against the properties of nature. Kubelka explains his use of the frame, the expanses of the screen, the temporicity that opens between the frames, and his economies of image and sound.

> My economy is one single frame and every part of the screen. So I feel that every frame that is projected too much makes the whole thing less articulate. So I always work in frames. Even the African film, which doesn't seem to be like that, because it's very natural, is worked frame by frame. I have twenty-four communication possibilities per second, and don't want to waste one. This is the economy. And the same is with the sound. Because one of the major fields where cinema works is when sound and image meet. So, the meeting of every frame with the sound is very important. That means you must have the same economy with sound as you have with the image.[29]

Each frame is capable of generating and sustaining its own meaning. The collision or "weak succession" of frames and sounds produce meanings that push the ex-



The slaughterhouse in *Blood of the Beasts*.

perience of the film away from an organic rendering of the world and toward, rather, an ecstatic one. "I want out, I want other laws, I want ecstasy . . . With this film I was after the cinematographic ecstasy."[30]

Kubelka reaches toward the outside of film, its ecstatic dimension, by tearing film sound from its natural synchronicity with imagery and replacing it elsewhere. For Kubelka, the gesture occurs through the movements of metaphor, to bring across, or graft.[31] It also happens, in *Africa*, over the repeated scenes of animal death, a kind of animal ecstasy. Animal death and the artificiality of metaphors establish Kubelka's parergon in *Africa*. Kubelka refuses to give the animal deaths in their totality by denying the synthesis of sound and image, preferring instead a kind of metrical displacement or deferral of each death that results in, to use another of Derrida's homonyms, *différance*. Separating the cry from the scene of death, the gunshot from causality, Kubelka drives the film outward, postponing the animal deaths indefinitely. Kubelka describes the synchronicity of the natural world and the enhancement of its exteriority in film. "And how does the lion exist? It exists by sync events. When the lion attacks he roars . . . each step he takes makes a sound. Sound and image sync events always link up in nature, and these clusters of sound and image make up the outside world."[32] The interiority of the film world provides for Kubelka the ecstatic possibility of evading natural laws (synchronicity) through the single frame, through speed. "I am not dependent on the natural flow of events in cinema." For Kubelka, cinema makes possible a form of ecstasy that is directed inward, toward an interiority, an ecstasy of the inside.

The scenes of animal death in *Our Trip to Africa* determine parergonal moments precisely when the sundering of sound and image exposes the film's interior dimension to a radical exteriority. Of the many such parergonal moments in *Africa*, Jonas Mekas comments on one: "Or the eye, when the dying lion lifts his eye and looks directly into the camera accusingly and forgivingly and then dies. If there is a great moment in cinema, this is one."[33] The look of the dying animal brings the spectator across the threshold of the film, the contact animetaphoric. Kubelka's animal deaths, which play to slivers of music, laughter, voices, and ambient sounds, forge a slight shift from fact that ultimately thrusts the spectator outward, toward a greater recognition of their brutality.

In his experimental travelogue *Sans Soleil* (1982), Chris Marker incorporates a found footage scene of a giraffe killing, framed by or inserted within, a funeral service for animals in Japan. The action is introduced in a series of parallel cuts that produces, like a Griffith chase sequence, a rapport between two scenes separated by time and space. In Japan, children attend a funeral and lay white chrysanthemums on the coffin. The banality of the ceremony is interrupted by the appearance of a llama (a sign draped on the animal reads "American camel llama"), as the narrator explains how Japanese views of death differ from those in the West. "The partition that separates life from death does not appear so thick to [the Japanese] as it does to a Westerner." The viewer learns that this funeral is for zoo animals that died during the year. As the camera tracks the movement of the children to the coffin from right to left and back again, Marker cuts to a long shot of a giraffe in the wild that moves across the frame from right to left. The movement match creates a rhythm between the back and forth of the children and the giraffe, connecting the shots against the shift in grain and color that suggests not only a spatial but also a temporal dislocation.

The first appearance of the giraffe lasts only briefly, no more than two or three seconds. The scene returns to the funeral, as the narrator notes that the children are curious about death, "as if they were trying, in order to understand the death of the animal, to stare through the partition." A quick cut shows a TV image of an assassin pointing a gun toward the lower right hand side of the frame, accompanied by the sound of a gunshot that echoes electronically. The shot is immediately followed by a cut to the giraffe, facing left, which takes a bullet and stumbles to the ground. On the soundtrack, Marker introduces music that resembles an electronically altered Noh score.

The giraffe rises and begins to run from right to left. A second shot, also accompanied by an electronic sound effect, explodes and the giraffe begins to bleed from two points at the base of its neck. The second bullet has pierced its neck and opened both an entry and exit wound. The giraffe staggers, loses its balance, and falls to the ground. Its horrific choreography is enhanced by the Noh music, which renders the scene theatrical, like the familiar death scene in so many Japanese period or samurai films. A brief allusion to these films is made in the TV shot that initiates the killing.

The next cut, reminiscent of the jump cut in *Electrocuting an Elephant*, moves the camera closer to the giraffe's head and focuses on its eye, which appears to look toward the camera. (This look also evokes the numerous animal stares in *The Blood of the Beasts* and the empty look of Kubelka's murdered lion.) The camera slowly zooms out revealing the dying animal's

writhing body. In another echo of Edison's film, a slender oblong object enters the frame from the left. The camera adjusts slightly to reveal the figure of a man, presumably the hunter, who points his rifle at the giraffe's head and shoots it at point-blank range. The shot triggers a cloud of dust and smoke. The scene turns blue, like the hue of a television screen and transforms, for an instant, the entire event into a TV program.

Marker cuts again, returning briefly to the Japanese funeral for zoo animals. The shot begins as a close-up of a pair of gloved hands and pulls back in a brief but rapid zoom out. The shot, which depicts the hands of a member of the funeral staff, lasts only seconds, mimicking the brief cut to the giraffe at the beginning of the sequence. The scene ends with a return to the wild. The camera follows a vulture as it descends from the sky and flies across the frame from left to right. It lands near the fallen giraffe's head. Another vulture has already begun to pick at the giraffe, which appears to have been killed for no purpose, its carcass left to the elements. A final cut brings the camera closer to the scene and shows the vultures devouring the giraffe's eye. The scene concludes with one vulture probing deeply into the giraffe's now empty eye socket, the origin of the animal look extinguished.

In this scene from *Sans Soleil*, Marker's partition functions not only as the divide between differing views of life and death, animal and human being, East and West, but also between the rhetoric of zoography and ethnography. Like the children that "stare through the partition," Marker's look blurs the lines that separate humanity from animals: children mourn the animals as if they were people; a hunter kills a giraffe like a condemned *man*, as if it were guilty. The exchange of human and animal features takes place across the threshold of the imaginary partition. The death of the animal that interrupts the Japanese animal funeral functions less as a metaphor (its purpose in *Strike* and *Rules of the Game*), than as a parasitic figure that overtakes the body of the film. The death of the giraffe moves quickly from an apparent metonymy to an animetaphor, a trope that destroys the trope, as well as the rhetoric of the scene, by absorbing the killing of the giraffe into the funeral scene as an integral dimension of it. It serves as a trauma, a lost memory that seems to erupt from the animal's past. As if the film remembers in place of the animal that can no longer remember, remembers for the animal, remembers the animal. In so doing the film survives the giraffe (even as it commemorates it) and assumes the properties of a remembering animal, an organism distinguished by the capacity to remember.

Shifting the focus from the primary narrative to its supplement, Marker's dynamic between the narrated scene (the animal funeral) and the haunting figure (the killing of the giraffe) tears down the partition, ultimately dismembering the very logic of the narrative. The scene that began with the funeral slips into the found footage, which seems to emerge from the phantom registers of memory or trauma; Marker folds the exteriority of the found footage into the body of the film until the external and internal features are no longer distinguishable. Marker then reverses the structure, so the death of the giraffe takes precedence, the funeral an afterthought or *flashforward*. The animetaphoric giraffe, which appeared to emerge from the past and from outside, enters into the narrative, takes its place in the chronology of events (death followed by funeral), as if it belonged there. The giraffe lingers in the film like a revenant. Neither inside nor outside, anterior nor posterior, Marker's dying giraffe produces a temporality of survival: the chronic temporality of the narrative is survived by the simultaneity of the scene. The perpetual presentation of the scene, which repeats itself like Edison's elephant *already in the first instance*, suspends the narrative in a return of the same. A metempsychosis of the giraffe as film, destined to die again and again in a cycle of animation and reanimation.

Two Deaths—

If, according to the strained logic of Western metaphysics, the animal cannot die—to the extent that death is seen as an exclusive feature of subjectivity and is reserved for those creatures capable of reflecting on being as such in language—then the death of the animal in film, on film, marks a caesura in the flow of that philosophy of being. The animal dies, is seen to die, in a place beyond the reaches of language. In place of language, in the place where it does not take place, the death of the animal generates an *animot*, a parergonal word that breaks the laws of language and at its limit. Representations of animal death are similarly destined to the rhetorical economy of an animetaphor, a figure at the end of figuration, an anti-metaphor that carries with it, embodies, the metaphor. "No animal was harmed in the making of this film" serves as a form of erasure that brings the death of the animal back into the ethical folds of the human world. But the disclaimer—a disavowal of animal death—never resolves the crisis, only defers it.

The death of an animal takes place on screen in spite of its impossibility. Or, as a spectacle of im-

possibility unique to cinema. Death occurs contemporaneously with life. The animal lives and dies simultaneously, animal life and death forming a synthesis in the film. Animal death becomes an aspect of life, while animal life is secured in that capacity to die, to experience and represent death apart from the dialectics of language. A possibility of death not bound by the anxious topographies of language, this death is not a proper death, nor is the life a proper life: in the world of cinema, the animal *lives on*, survives. "Living on can mean," says Derrida, "a reprieve or an afterlife, 'life after life' or life after death, more life or more than life, and better; the state of suspension in which it's over—*and* over again."[34] Beyond life and death, in the deferred ontologies of the parergon, the cinema animal survives.

The animal survives its death as a film, as another form of animal, captured by the technologies of animation. The cinema animal registers two distinct lives and two distinct deaths, one animal, the other technological. This duality echoes another notion of the duality of life and death in the biological sciences. Following Xavier Bichat's assertion of "the co-presence of two 'animals' in every organism," Giorgio Agamben posits two forms of life: organic life, which is oriented inward, like that of a plant, and animal life, which is marked by an organism's relation to others, to externality.[35] Organic life designates the functioning of respiratory and circulatory systems, as well as other vital organs, whereas animal life comprises the operations of the senses and the psyche, such as the intermittence of consciousness and the passages of memory. At the very least, the two modes of life determine two modes or moments of death, termed by Bichat, organic and animal. Most importantly, perhaps, these two modes are frequently characterized, like Kubelka's film, by a non-coincidence. The animal death can occur long before its organic counterpart, meaning that "life can survive itself."[36] Says Agamben: "Just as in the fetus organic life begins before that of animal life, so in getting old and dying it survives its animal death."[37] After the animal has died, the organism may survive, carrying, as it were, a profound but radically distant trace of the animal in the continued perseverance of the organism.

Can Bichat's notion of animal and organic life be expanded to encompass a third form of life, a technological life or vitality, what Manuel DeLanda calls "nonorganic life"? Can the dialectic between organic and animal life sustain the parergon of a third form of life, a machinic life that supplements the dialectic function? DeLanda argues that even nonorganic systems (chemical clocks, wave patterns, elemental stratification) can display signs of a self-organization common to organic life forms and participate, along with organisms, in the evolutionary process.[38] Nonorganic life forms, which DeLanda collects under the genus of a "machinic phylum," exhibit a full range of the features of life and, perhaps most importantly, interact with organic life forms to generate complex systems. Cinema, whose organization of images, sounds, and movements, always exceeds the intentions of any single author, may determine a distinct species within DeLanda's machinic phylum. And if nonorganic life forms can, like their organic counterparts, die, could one posit the notion of a technological death? A technological death that defies death through repetition and initiates a mnemotechnics of life and death, a supplement that extends organic and animal lives into the technologies of memory.

The desire to move from organic life to nonorganic life, to survive the fragility of flesh in the taxidermic frames of cinema, to transpose anima to animation drives the refrain of Peter Greenaway's *A Zed and Two Noughts* (1985) or *ZOO*, in the form of a series of time-lapse images of decaying animals that periodically interrupt the narrative. Two brothers, haunted by the deaths of their wives, begin to film the decay of first plant, then animal bodies, ultimately themselves. The time-lapse films form an evolutionary refrain as Greenaway accelerates the frame-by-frame disappearance of life, but also the transfer of life to film.[39] Life begins in the film, ends in it, is survived by it, as film. Greenaway's time-lapses occupy a liminal space within the film's diegesis: they are part of the narrative but also serve as pauses that desynchronize the diegesis.

In *ZOO*, the time-lapse scenes seek to capture the precise moments when the disappearances and transfers of life occur, generating a fantasy of the frame. Greenaway draws attention to the frame, to the movement between and within the frame, and the illusion of movement that propels film animation. Each frame probes the moment, the fractions of time, for some sign of the transition from life to death, death to reanimation, the movement or *metaphor* from one form of life to another, organic life to nonorganic life, organic death to technological survival.

From parergon to frame, the work of the outside returns to the heart of the inside, the place that is at once metaphoric and anti-metaphoric, the organ that is organic and machinic, "ecstatic," in Kubelka's words. On film, the death of the animal moves from an impossible *event* into the shadows of a machine that

makes new forms of life and death possible. Cinema forms a parergon around life and opens a space between two imaginary realms, life and language. The animal, which is neither fact nor figure, occupies the parergonal space made possible by film animetaphorically. Cinema is an animal, animality a form of technology, technology an aspect of life. A life forged in the radical reanimation of the conditions of vitality as such.

Akira Mizuta Lippit is Associate Professor of film and visual studies at the University of California, Irvine. He is the author of *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife* (2000).

Notes

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1. Only films that have been rated "Acceptable" by the American Humane Association (AHA) are allowed to utilize the disclaimer. " 'Animal' means," according to AHA guidelines, "all sentient creatures including birds, fish, reptiles and insects." The Western Regional Office of the AHA's Film and Television Unit, which opened in Los Angeles in 1940, has, since 1980 assumed the role of monitoring animals in film and television productions. According to its website: "In 1980 the entertainment industry entrusted AHA with the sole authority to protect animals used in film and television through a contract with the Screen Actors Guild. We prevent mistreatment of animal actors by reviewing scripts and working with trainers and producers prior to production and by being present on sets when significant animal activity takes place." The AHA code mandates that no animals may be "killed, injured, overworked or caused discomfort." Among the specifics, fish can only be kept out of water for thirty seconds. AHA monitors were granted law enforcement powers in 1997. Even though no fish appear in the film, Steven Soderbergh's *Schizopolis* (1996) opens with the claim: "No fish were harmed during the making of this film."
2. But not against human beings. In Martin Scorsese's *Bringing Out the Dead* (1999), the following lines appear on the penultimate credit: "American Humane Association was on set to monitor the animal action. No animal was harmed." The sentences are followed by what appears to be an inspection number. The film, which features scenes of human injury and death, scores of corpses and phantoms, contains only two scenes with animals. One involves a pet dog licking the hand of the film's protagonist, Frank Pierce (Nicholas Cage), and the other shows tropical fish from an overturned aquarium, suffocating and twitching on the floor. If nothing else, the emphasis on animal safety in a film that barely features animals and depicts instead a relentless array of human injury produces a strange sense of displacement.
3. Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 54.
4. Francis Bacon, in David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon* (Oxford: Alden Press, 1987), 30.
5. Jacques Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)," trans. David Wills, *Critical Inquiry* 28 (Winter 2002): 409. "L'animal que donc je suis," in *L'animal autobiographique: Autour de Jacques Derrida*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet (Paris: Galilée, 1999), 291-92. Derrida's title plays on Descartes's *cogitatum*, but also on the doubled meanings of the conjugated verb "suis," which can be read as "am" and "follow": "The animal therefore that I am, that I follow." The title is itself an *animot.*
6. On the inherent multiplicity of animals, see Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 232-309. "What we are saying is that every animal is fundamentally a band, a pack. That it has pack modes, rather than characteristics" (239).
7. For a sustained discussion of *animetaphorics*, see Akira Mizuta Lippit, *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 162-197. In *Electric Animal*: "Animal and metaphor, a metaphor made flesh, a living metaphor that is by definition not a metaphor, antimetaphor—"animetaphor" (165).
8. Human beings *are* sometimes harmed and even killed during the production of films. Among the notable instances is Brandon Lee's ill-fated attempt to portray an undead human-animal hybrid in *The Crow* (1994), which was completed and released posthumously. In the film, Lee's character Eric Draven dies twice. Lee himself was killed when a prop gun misfired during production. Lee's unfinished scenes were manufactured filmically. "Digital movie magic," writes Leonard Maltin, "enabled him to appear in the rest of the picture" (*Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide*, ed. Leonard Maltin, 1998 edition [New York: Signet, 1997], 289). Maltin's invocation of "movie magic" appears to function here both colloquially and supernaturally. Both diegetically and extradiegetically, Lee survived his own death, proved undead, like an animal.

   This statement appears at the end of *The Crow*: "The animals used in this motion picture were in no way mistreated and all scenes in which they appeared were under strict supervision with the utmost concern for their handling."
9. Violence against human beings and animals blend in the specular idiom of racism, where the distinctions between humanity and animality collapse. The 1991 beating of "black motorist" Rodney King by members of the Los Angeles Police Department, for example, illustrates the moment of convergence between human and animal violence and spectacle. Rodney King—at times a "gorilla," at others "bear-like," and as he himself later put it, "like a cow being slaughtered"—was beaten *like an animal.* The force of this episode, however, arose not from the racist violence as such, but from the status of its visibility and apparent invisibility. See in this regard, Akira Mizuta Lippit, "Rodney Kingdom: Mnemotechnics and the Animal World," in *Women & Performance* 9:2, 18 (1997): 53-80.

   Frank Darabont's *The Green Mile* (1999) illustrates the confusion between race, humanity, and animality. Based on a novel by Stephen King (who also wrote *Pet Sematary*), this film is set almost entirely on death row, named in the

narrative "the green mile." A kind of interior outdoors, a corridor that leads to an ultimate exteriority. The narrative concerns an African-American "giant," falsely convicted of raping and then murdering two white girls. The convict, John Coffey (Michael Clarke Duncan) possesses, like Jesus Christ, with whom he shares initials, the power to heal the sick by taking the illness into his own body, "taking it back," as he calls it. Coffey, described in the film as "a force of nature" and assumed to be "retarded," possesses only minimal powers of language. In a central sequence prison guards and inmates mourn the death of a small mouse, stomped to death by a sadistic prison guard. Using his gift, Coffey brings the mouse back to life. In *The Green Mile*, the racism of the judicial system and the ritual murder of black men are elided by JC, who elects to heal in sequence, a prison guard, a mouse, and the warden's wife while the death row inmates are electrocuted one after another. In the midst of the carnage, JC resurrects only the mouse. The affective economy of *The Green Mile* resembles Nazi love, which is capable of deep affection toward animals while perpetrating genocide. The film ends with a disclaimer: "American Humane Association was on set to monitor the animal action. No animal was harmed."

10. For a sustained discussion of this axiom and the crisis to which it leads, see Lippit, *Electric Animal*, 27-73.
11. Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone, 1991), vols. 2 and 3, 82. Bataille's own position with regard to this idea is more ambivalent than that of some of his predecessors. For Bataille, the repulsion of death distances human beings from themselves, necessitating eroticism, which returns the self-conscious being to itself. The knowledge of death, which facilitates a knowledge of self, engenders the repulsion of death, and by extension self, which must then be transformed back into a desire for life through eros.
12. Mary Lambert's *Pet Sematary* (1989) and its sequel, *Pet Sematary II* (1992), actualize the fantasy of animal reanimation by introducing a zombie animal cemetery where dead animals, once buried, return to life. Eventually, deceased human beings are also buried there in an effort to bring them back. One character describes the cemetery, which is designated by a child's phonetic spelling, "sematary," as a "place where the dead speak." The transition from animal to human reanimation occurs when the protagonist couple's youngest child is killed in an accident and they bury him in the *sematary* (beyond it actually, in an "Indian" burial ground). Following the return of the pet cat, the young boy, who barely speaks to begin with, signals his altered state with a disembodied voice (produced in an echo chamber) that seems to exist apart from him. This zombie voice consists primarily of laughing sounds and few words. *Pet Sematary* ends with an exaggerated disclaimer; "No animals were harmed *in any way* during the making of this film" (emphasis added).
13. Jean-Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Norton, 1973), 349.
14. Hervé Aubron, "L'espoir inconnu de l'escargot," in *Vertigo* 19 (1999): 11. The entire issue is devoted to the subject of animality and film.
15. In *Thinking in Pictures*, Temple Grandin attributes her animality to autism, which, she claims, allows her to see the world like an animal. Grandin links the capacity to see the world as an animal to a form of cinematic or videographic visuality that sees, records, and plays back. "Cattle vision is like having wide-angle camera lenses mounted on the sides of your head" (*Thinking in Pictures: And Other Reports from My Life with Autism* [New York: Vintage, 1995], 145). Grandin's research has contributed to the more humane treatment of animals in slaughterhouses. She claims that one third of the cattle and hogs are handled in facilities she has designed or helped to design. See in this connection, Errol Morris's film about Grandin, *Stairway to Heaven* (1998).
16. Matthew Josephson, *Edison: A Biography* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1959), 348.
17. Adorno discusses the economy of a "pathic projection" that makes possible the transition from killing animals to killing human beings in his fragment, "People Are Looking at You" (*Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott [London: Verso, 1974], 105). The phantasmatic leap through the "manic gaze" of the dying animal is made possible by an *animot*, an incantation that is meant to protect the violent perpetrator, "It's only an animal." For further discussion of this passage, see Lippit, *Electric Animal*, 167-69.
18. Lisa Cartwright, *Screening the Body: Tracing Medicine's Visual Culture* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 17.
19. Montaigne believed that elephants practice religion. In "Apology for Raymond Sebond," Montaigne writes: "We can also say that the elephants have some participation in religion, since after many ablutions and purifications we see them, raising their trunks like arms and keeping their eyes fixed toward the rising sun, stand still a long time in meditation and contemplation at certain hours of the day" (Michel de Montaigne, "Apology for Raymond Sebond," in *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1958], 343).
20. Cartwright, *Screening the Body*, 18.
21. Walt Disney's animated feature film *Bambi* (1942), memorable in part for its disturbing view of animal killing, in particular of Bambi's mother at the hands of hunters, represents an intersection of fable and form, allegory and animality. (It is worth noting that the traumatic killing of Bambi's mother takes place off-screen. The camera follows Bambi's flight, the death of his mother registered by the sound of an off-screen gunshot. Nor are the killers ever seen in the film. The economies of visuality in the animal world are a compelling aspect of Disney's film.) Besides the allegorical readings the narrative inspires, the animal form itself provided, for Disney and his animators, a set of aesthetic and metamorphic challenges. Matt Cartmill describes Disney's response to his animators who pleaded for permission to anthropomorphize the animal form, to be allowed to give the animals human features and gestures. "No, answered Disney and the film's directors; human-looking postures and movements were forbidden. The animators gritted their teeth and began imagining themselves into the bodies of deer, learning to express human feelings with shifts in weight support and gait patterns, with head and neck posture, and the flicks of the ears and tail" (*A View to a Death in the Morning: Hunting and Nature*

through History [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993], 169). Cartmill narrates, in a chapter titled "The Bambi Syndrome," the becoming-animal of *Bambi*, from a misanthropic 1924 novel by Viennese author Siegmund Salzmann (later Felix Salten) to the various versions of the Disney script, which evolved into a virtually languageless film. "The final script contains less than a thousand spoken words, and all the hero's lines put together account for less than two hundred of them. Almost the only sound effects in *Bambi* are a few gunshots, rabbit thumps, and bird songs. *Bambi* is essentially a silent movie: a wordless, rhythmical ballet performed to an orchestral accompaniment" (174). The gradual disappearance of words in the final version of the film suggests a movement toward the animal and away from the fable.

22. In a telling contrast, Charlie Chaplin, whose enthusiasm for socialism was perhaps more tempered than Eisenstein's, similarly breaks the diegetic tissue with an animal metaphor in *Modern Times* (1936). The first shot of the film—between the clock face that serves as a background for the opening credits and epigraph and the shot of factory workers exiting the subway on their way to work—consists of a flock of white sheep (one black sheep in the middle, an *a priori* metaphor for Chaplin's machine-jamming character) moving from the background to foreground in a high-angle shot. What is peculiar about this animal metaphor, perhaps, is the fact that it occurs before the diegesis has been established. It serves as a transitional shot between the credits and diegesis, a parergon that frames several *animots*: "like sheep" and "black sheep," in particular. For Chaplin, these workers, even when they are not being slaughtered, are like animals. Mechanized labor makes animals of human beings. Chaplin's metaphor suggests that the workers in Eisenstein's *Strike* have always been animals waiting for slaughter, their animality inherent in their labor.
23. Sergei Eisenstein, "The Montage of Film Attractions," in *S. M. Eisenstein: Selected Works, Volume I, Writings, 1922-34*, ed. and trans. Richard Taylor (London: BFI, 1988), 43.
24. Vivian Sobchack, "Toward a Phenomenology of Nonfictional Film Experience," in *Collecting Visible Evidence*, ed. Jane M. Gaines and Michael Renov (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 246.
25. A virtually identical sequence and structure of killing unfold in Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali's *L'Age d'or* (1930), which opens with a brief documentary on scorpions. This segment ends with the death of a rat, which has been stung by a scorpion. The documentary mode (voice-over and film texture) situates the scenes to come in a metaphorical framework. One reads the institutions of Western culture in general (nation, government, society, and family) and the Catholic Church in particular as metaphors of scorpions' poison. The death of the rat is echoed in a later scene when a gamekeeper, in a flash of anger, shoots a boy (described by Linda Williams as his son), once from behind and again, to finish him off, as he lies on the ground wounded. "The gamekeeper grabs his gun and shoots the boy, who falls like a rabbit" (Linda Williams, *Figures of Desire: A Theory and Analysis of Surrealist Film* [Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981], 121).
26. For a searching analysis of Franju and horror, see Adam Lowenstein, "Films Without a Face: Shock Horror in the Cinema of Georges Franju," *Cinema Journal* 37.4 (1998): 37-58. Lowenstein calls Franju's cinema "shock horror": "the employment of graphic, visceral shock to access the historical substrate of traumatic experience" (37).
27. The framing and angling of animal scenes in general, deaths in particular warrant a separate study. The uses of long shots and close-ups, high and low angles, and camera movement among other aspects of mise-en-scène, as well as the frequency with which those shots are intercut, establish specific relations between the viewer and the spectacle. A more systematic inquiry into those elements may be revealing.
28. From "L'Héautontimorouménos": "Je te frapperai sans colère/Et sans haine, comme un boucher . . ."
29. Jonas Mekas, "Interview with Peter Kubelka," in *Film Culture Reader*, ed. P. Adams Sitney (New York: Praeger, 1970), 287-88.
30. Peter Kubelka, "The Theory of Metrical Film," in *The Avant-Garde Film: A Reader of Theory and Criticism*, ed. P. Adams Sitney (New York: Anthology Film Archives, 1978), 158.
31. Kubelka has been steadfast in his theories of the metrical film, metaphor, and graft. See Jean-Claude Lebensztejn's 1998 interview with Kubelka, "Entretien avec Peter Kubelka," in *Les Cahiers du Mnam 65* (automne 1998): 95-112. "On prend une chose et on y met une autre puis on recommence et on voit—et ça c'est la métaphore. Je prends le terme métaphore dans un sens très vaste, porter ailleurs, et la synthèse" (97). ("We take something and put it besides something else, repeat and look—that is metaphor. I take the term metaphor in a very vast sense, to transport elsewhere and synthesize.")
32. Kubelka, "Metrical Film," 157.
33. Mekas, "Peter Kubelka," 287.
34. Jacques Derrida, "Living On: Border Lines," in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, ed. Harold Bloom et al., trans. James Hulbert (New York: Continuum, 1979), 77.
35. Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone, 1999), 152. Agamben's readings are from Xavier Bichat, *Recherches physiologiques sur la vie et la mort* (Paris: Flammarion, 1986).
36. Ibid., 151.
37. Ibid., 152.
38. Manuel DeLanda, "Nonorganic Life," in ed. Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter (New York: Zone, 1992), 129-67. For DeLanda, organic and nonorganic life forms are not necessarily separate systems. Just as organisms occupy larger nonorganic systems—the earth itself, according to DeLanda—nonorganic systems inhabit organisms. "There is a sense, then, in which we are all inhabited by processes of nonorganic life. We carry in our bodies a multiplicity of self-organizing processes of a definite physical and mathematical nature—a set of bifurcations and attractors that could be determined empirically, at least in principle" (153).
39. Among the various allusions to evolution that Greenaway makes is the use of a blue neon sign that spells ZOO. Sometimes shot from behind, Greenaway rearranges the sign to read OOZ, an anagram of zoo that restores all of the animals to a state of decay, but also to primordial ooze.

Andrew Horton

LAUGHTER DARK & JOYOUS
in Recent Films from the Former Yugoslavia

The bus breaks down in *Who Is Singing Over There?*

Yugoslav Social Comedy with an Edge

In the opening scene of Slobodan Sijan's *Who Is Singing Over There?* (Yugoslavia, 1981), two ragtag Balkan gypsies face us and, as the older plays the accordion, sing a song that contains the chorus, "I'm miserable. I was born this way. Oh, but to have dreamed it all." The lines draw a laugh whenever the film plays, yet the irony of these words has grown even deeper over the years for this film, which was recently voted by Yugoslav and Bosnian film critics as the best Yugoslav film ever made.[1] The film chronicles a bus ride through the Serbian countryside in April of 1941 with an ensemble of comic figures representing a cross section of Serbian culture in addition to the two gypsies. By film's end, in a mode of historical fiction, the bus reaches Belgrade at the moment the Germans bombed the city, killing thousands (fact), including all those on the bus except for the gypsies who climb out of the wreckage and sing the same song (Sijan's story), once more facing us as we hear, "Oh, but to have dreamed it all," through the ashes of what was Belgrade.

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The tragedies that have unfolded in the former Yugoslavia during the past decade are well known. And yet, the complexities of the cultures involved are not fully understood in the West or even in the Balkans themselves. As Robert Kaplan has written, "A difficult ethnic history will not, by itself, necessarily cause the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives in conditions resembling the Holocaust."[2] Even less appreciated by many outside the Balkans is the importance of laughter—both dark and joyous—in films such as *Who Is Singing Over There?* from the republics that once made up Yugoslavia. Our focus in these few pages is to explore such cinematic laughter, especially as it is seen in a recent addition to this long tradition, Goran Paskaljevic's *Cabaret Balkan* (Yugoslavia, 1998, originally titled *Powder Keg*), which is representative of an on-going group of Balkan comic dramas that reflect realities and issues of this current post-Bosnian and post-Kosovo war era.

Yugoslav cinema of the past twenty-five years has been one of the most vibrant, imaginative and provocative cinemas anywhere with filmmakers such as Emir Kusturica, Rajko Grlic, Goran Markovic, Srdjan Karanovic, Slobodan Sijan, Milcho Manchevski, and Goran Paskaljevic winning both strong box-office receipts and numerous international awards.[3] That generation, which came into prominence in the late 70s, was building on the ground-breaking innovations of the so-called "black cinema" makers of the 1960's such as Dusan Makavejev, Zika Pavlovic, and Aleksandar Pekovic whose films also evoked much laughter.

If one could identify a major trend among the filmmakers listed above, it would be their ability to mix social satire, embracing or bordering on surrealism, with playfully imaginative tales of individuals attempting to find personal happiness against all odds. Marshall Tito's brand of independent ("self management") Communism allowed the kind of artistic freedom that flourished in Yugoslavia at the time but, which in Czechoslovakia, where many of the Yugoslav filmmakers just mentioned studied, brought Russian tanks into the streets when the Czech writers and filmmakers attempted the same degrees of self expression. The fruitful Yugoslav cinematic results in recent years can be seen in the films of Emir Kusturica, such as *When Father Was Away On Business* (1985), *Time of the Gypsies* (1989), and *Underground* (1997), which in the spirit of Soviet cinema at its most effective, spoke to its culture about itself, and proved enormously popular because of its dark and joyous humor and wry surrealistic imagination.

What is especially remarkable about the former Yugoslav filmmakers listed above including, of course, Sijan with *Who Is Singing Over There?* and many of his other comedies, is that their films were box-office hits as well as festival winners. Even beyond such statistics, these films have been "memorized" by several generations of Yugoslavs as significant parts of their culture, because they do reflect social and political realties with a wry and ironic tone. *Who Is Singing Over There?,* for instance, played frequently on Serbian television while the NATO bombs fell on Belgrade in 1999. The dark irony of a comedy about German bombs destroying Belgrade in 1941 while NATO bombs shattered most of the same city almost sixty years later was not lost on a population weary of both its own leadership and European and American "easy" solutions to complex issues.

Cabaret Balkan flows from such a tradition. Yet, as we shall see, it offers new variations on these familiar themes. I see this popular film as representative in yet another way as well. William Finnegan has correctly noted that what we are witnessing currently in the continuing dangerous situation of the former Yugoslavia, including Bosnia and Kosovo, is at heart a process of recreating a sense of personal, cultural, and national identity. "The resurgent nationalisms of ex-Yugoslavia are not finished colliding," he notes, adding that, "Everyone in the former Yugoslavia is stuck with having to reinvent himself, with having to construct new 'imagined communities' from the debris of the old Communist federation."[4] That cinema continues to be a significant part of that discourse is central to our close-up on this recent film.

A final note of introduction: while my title suggests the importance of laughter, I wish to acknowledge the fact that comedy in the widest sense embraces much more than laughter per se.[5] For example, we realize comedy involves some degree of triumph or victory by tale's end, whether that triumph evokes laugh or not, or whether it is a major triumph or even a minor one. In point of fact, even minor triumphs must be taken as a sign of hope in such tragic times as the past decade in the Balkans. Take, for instance, the following song at the beginning of Sarajevo filmmaker Ademir Kenovic's film, *The Perfect Circle* (France/ Bosnia, 1996):

> "What are you doing, my Child?
> I'm dreaming, Mother.
> Dreaming you're asking me
> What are you doing, my Son?

What does the song in your dream say, Son?
Mother, it says I once had a house
Now I have none, Mother.
That's what it says.
And I once had a voice and a language.
Now I have no voice and no language.
With the voice that I lost
In the language that I lost
I sing a song, Mother
About the house that I lost."

Such a song triggers no laughter in audiences anywhere. But this song, coming as it does in the opening of this tale, set during the Bosnian war and mixing pain and humor, sets an ironic tone and a theme of triumph and thus "comedy," even though the actual victory is such a seemingly small one. That is, in the face of the loss of "everything," the son can still sing about such loss.

This wider sense of comedy (remember there are few laughs in Dante's *Divine Comedy*!) may not qualify some of the films from the former Yugoslavia as candidates for the Comedy section of your local video shop. But for those who have suffered unspeakable grief and loss, such a triumph is something to celebrate.

Cabaret Balkan: "Why Do You Laugh at Me?"

"Why do you laugh at me? Do you think I'm funny?" asks the campishly Dracula-looking stage performer/narrator in a nightclub called Cabaret Balkan in the opening of Goran Paskaljevic's provocative dark ensemble comedy, *Powder Keg* (1998), retitled *Cabaret Balkan* for its American release. And for the next hundred minutes, the audience is trapped inside Belgrade on a winter's night several years ago—after the Bosnian War and over a year before the Kosovo War—as a series of interlocking stories and interwoven characters act out "explosive" relationships.

The film was the leading box-office hit in the former Yugoslavia for 1998 and has received festival awards and wide attention abroad as its release has coincided with the public's desire to learn more about the Balkans than CNN and the daily papers have provided. What all audiences learn almost immediately is that nothing depicted in the film is lightheartedly comic even though there is much dark laughter. For Paskaljevic's film, based on a stage play by the co-screenwriter Dejan Duvoski, a 26-year-old playwright from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, is a searing look at contemporary Belgrade (Skopje in the stage play) during a 24-hour period in 1995 as the Dayton Peace Accord regarding Bosnia is being settled "off camera" in the background. What we experience is a slice of Serbian society caught between war and peace, basically cut off from Western Europe by NATO sanctions, and with no clear future or solutions in view.

The American title, *Cabaret Balkan,* emphasizes the theatricality of the film, which frames and intersperses "real life" stories with a sense of performance, reminiscent not only of the traditions outlined above, but, of course, of films such as Bob Fosse's *Cabaret* (1972), based on Christopher Isherwood's book, *Goodbye to Berlin,* about life in pre-WWII Berlin as the Nazi party was coming to power. That Paskaljevic's narrator faces us and speaks directly to us establishes the performative basis of the whole film. The narrator ends the film in the same mode of direct address. But this time he is "off duty," seated at the bar, repeating the "Good health!" wish that has brought nothing but disaster to characters throughout the film who have uttered the same words, and then he passes out. Theater and life become, finally, not a "powder keg," but unconsciousness, as Belgrade and the cinema fade to black.

There is also another cabaret interlude halfway through the film that connects the narrator to one of the tales. The narrator is the brother of the former wife of one of the characters who has returned to Yugoslavia to win back her love. In fact we come to know that the narrator personally knows most of those who hang out in Cabaret Balkan. Such a frame to this Balkan tale invites us and, in fact, demands that we look at the "real" stories as performances too, or at least as variations on a theme of what happens when the slightest incident can cause people to explode into excesses of speech, action, and violence to themselves and those around them.

The Balkan wink to the audience that all is "performance," and that the narrator is alive at the film's end, suggests survival despite all, and that is a form of triumph, the basis of a wider definition of comedy. As Croatian director Rajko Grlic recently said, "For us, in the ex-Yugoslavia, laughter is a way of survival, but there is no comedy without suffering."[6]

Despite the film's sense of performance, it candidly confronts the social and political brutality that has engulfed Yugoslav society. In one confrontation after another, escalating to the stoning and torching of a young Bosnian refugee boy, who is wrongfully accused of stealing gasoline, the "powder keg" theme of Serbian society on the edge is explored with riveting

acting by an impressive ensemble of Serbian actors. Much like Robert Altman's *Short Cuts,* or even Max Ophul'*s La Ronde, Cabaret Balkan* interweaves the stories of a number of characters who are not directly connected, but who cross paths and intersect in ironic, brutal and often darkly comic ways, coming full-circle to an "explosive" ending. A middle-aged man and his friend trash the respectable, old apartment of a family with a 17-year-old boy who accidentally damaged his car in a traffic collision. A young cab driver follows a badly crippled police officer into a bar, and roughs him up badly before story's end. The young cabby explains that it was indeed he himself who had crippled the officer when the officer attacked him months before for parking with his girlfriend near a park, and that he, the cabby, could no longer have children, due to the beating the officer gave him at that time. Two old friends trade insults about screwing each other's wives and girlfriends, and then one murders the other with a broken beer bottle in a shower. A youth angered that a city bus is 15 minutes late leaving, hijacks the bus for a joyride through town terrorizing the riders until a Bosnian university professor now turned bus driver, catches up with him and either beats him unconscious or, perhaps, murders him. This is but a partial list of horrors that become even more disturbing, because, as Paskaljevic has explained in numerous interviews in the Press and on NPR, he consciously wanted the film to have almost no reference to "the war" or scenes on the battlefield. All these stories unfold with hatred and violence within the streets, homes, and public places of today's Belgrade.

Key to the theme of the whole film is the question of guilt or blame. Who is guilty or responsible for the situation that has turned every citizen into a miniature powder keg? What the whole film accomplishes so intensely is a feeling that all are guilty of something, but that no one is taking responsibility for anything. A middle-aged gentleman in a suit urges another man, whose car is damaged by a teen driver, to smash the teen's windshield and pull the boy out through the window. Passengers on the hijacked bus show some signs of fear, but even more indications of pleasure and enjoyment of this illegal action. The overall feeling, therefore, is of complete hopelessness.

This film has been important for the audience Paskaljevic originally targeted: Serbs and former Yugoslavs everywhere. Paskaljevic's film and Duvoski's play follow in a strong Balkan comic stage tradition as well as in the tradition of cinematic social comedy mentioned above. Serbia has always had a rich tradition of theatrical social comedy, especially as seen in the works of Branislav Nusic in the early decades of the century. Nusic's plays oscillate between caricature and character satire, between farce and comedy of manners, and almost always depict patriarchal traditional society under siege from peasant culture on the one hand and "modern" hedonistic trends on the other.[7]

Thus, one senses something of an echo of Nusic's sarcastic and biting wit in many of the exchanges throughout *Cabaret Balkan,* especially as spoken by our cabaret narrator, and the point is that Belgrade audiences expect such cutting wit and timely references in their films. The narrator's volcanic flow of language, half-way through the film, sounds almost like some form of a Balkan rap song, half-mad and half-playful, anarchistic, absurdist, and definitely excessive:

> All the politicians/ Europe's undertakers/ the worms, ideas,
> chaos,/ ghettos of paranoia/ hermetic circles/ esoteric circles/ dickomantics, schizomantics,/ necromantics, metamantics./ Fuck
> it all./ It's so boring, children./ Ethnic tension civil war/ brother killing brother./If you have an open wound/ don't wait for somebody to help
> you./ Cauterize it./ Don't pity anybody./ If you pity anybody/ fuck
> him till he's dead./ Because death is beautiful/ and the world is
> absurd./ Politics is madness/ and I'm full of shit.

The lines both amuse and frustrate us, for, like the film itself, Paskaljevic's cabaret narrator falls into absurd nihilism, sarcastically undermining his own position so that we cannot criticize him for he is "full of shit."

The arresting premise at the center of the script is the frighteningly honest perception that the real "powder keg" in the former Yugoslavia does not have to do with Muslim against Orthodox Nationalist but, ultimately, Serb against Serb, as the "situation" appears to have drained away all aspects of humanity and civility. Paskaljevic also leaves us with no doubt that these problems appear almost entirely male-centered with women forced to react to and/or accept the excessive immature behavior of the men around them. This diminished sense of Balkan women at the end of the century has been well described recently by Sabrina Ramet. She writes, "In the age of politicized nationalism, the self-proclaimed defenders of 'the Nation' reinterpret the community in folk-mythological terms, reducing women to 'womenfolk' who need men's protection and construing feminists who dare

Lazar Ristovski and Dragan Nikolic in Goran Paskaljevic's *Cabaret Balkan.*

to challenge the patriarchal agenda of the nationalists as witches."[8]

Cabaret Balkan creates its own "performance," and judges its world as "hopeless" and "full of shit," and collapses, like its narrator, in its own bleak nihilism. Many Serbian filmmakers and intellectuals admire the film for just such glorious pessimism. A common refrain has been, "Yes. We are excessive and self-indulgent and abusive of women, but, after all, we are Balkans. That's the way we are." When one tries to suggest that such a concept is performative, the topic often changes swiftly. There is a refusal to take the challenge seriously.

The confusion many American, and other foreign audiences, feel about these "ghettos of paranoia" enacted in *Cabaret Balkan* is understandable. Earlier Serb "comedies" left no such confusion. Sijan's *Who Is Singing Over There?,* for instance, is clear in its irony. Because the two gypsies sing to us directly throughout the film as if it were a performance, we come to accept the whole film as a "song" they are joyfully singing despite the sadness within the words. At film's end, it appears that everyone on the bus they have been riding is killed in a bombing. But the two gypsies climb out of the rubble, dust themselves off, face us, and sing the same song they did at the beginning of the film, this time adding new lyrics. We can't help but end with a smile. We "get" the comic-yet-darkly-ironic sense of triumph.

Still, Paskaljevic's earlier films managed a less self-indulgent blend of dark comedy and social observation than seen in this recent effort. *Special Treatment* (1980) is, like *Cabaret Balkan,* an ensemble piece. It tracks the inmates of an alcoholic ward of a hospital under the tyrannical rule of a totalitarian doctor, Ilich, who wishes to use them in an "experiment" in psycho-drama outside the hospital. This thinly veiled satiric send-up of communism turns into a carnival of failure but, much like *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975), to which it bears similarities in shape and style, Paskaljevic's film of almost 20 years ago, leaves us with a thoughtful smile rather than a confused pessimism.

The success of *Cabaret Balkan* is that we have sensed that all of the characters are guilty to one degree or another. And, surely, the explosive despair depicted in the film reflects much of the unresolved hostilities within Serbian culture. However, the over-the-top self-indulgence of this film leaves one feeling numb rather than enlightened about the darkening hours in Serbia's dangerous situation. Unlike the gypsies at the end of *Who Is Singing Over There?,* no one climbs out of the wreckage in Paskaljevic's latest and darkest work to face us with wide grins as they begin once more to sing their troubles away. We sense this is a brilliantly acted message-in-a-bottle film. Yet, there is also the sense that the bottle itself will explode before it reaches shore.

Thus, as earlier stated, there is a need for an on-going process of reinvention and redirection of rage, confusion, and basic beliefs within the former Yugoslavia. William Finnegan, puts it well when he asks, "What will they do with their xenophobia, their psychologically mangled ethnocentrism, their war culture of paranoia and denial, and their isolation, disappointment, and guilt?"[9] *Cabaret Balkan* cinematically asks similar questions, and yet leaves us with no clear answers. Paskaljevic's dark laughter, however, invites us all to take seriously what no cabaret can turn into comedy.

Andrew Horton is the Jeanne H Smith Professor of Film & Video Studies at the University of Oklahoma, the author and/or editor of 14 books on cinema, and an award-winning screenwriter whose credits include *Something In Between* (Srdjan Karanovic, 1983).

Notes

1. Andrew Horton, "'But to Have Dreamed It All': The Balkans' Healing Irony," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (July 2, 1999), B11.
2. Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (New York: Vintage, 1993), xi.
3. Horton, "Satire and Sympathy: A New Wave of Yugoslavian Filmmakers," *Cineaste,* Vol. XI, 2 (1982), 18.
4. Finnegan, "Letter from the Balkans: The Next War," *The New Yorker* (Sept. 20, 1999), 72.
5. Horton, *Comedy/Cinema/Theory* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), 9.
6. Personal interview with Rajko Grlic.
7. Horton, "Yugoslavia: Multi-Faceted Cinema," *World Cinema Since 1945* ed. by William Luhr, (New York: Ungar, 1987), 652.
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9. Finnegan, 61.

Reviews

Being John Malkovich

Director: Spike Jonze. Producers: Steven Golin, Charlie Kaufman, Michael Kuhn, Vincent Landay, Sandy Stern, Michael Stipe. Writer: Charlie Kaufman. Cinematograper: Lance Acord. Gramercy.

1999's *Being John Malkovich,* directed by Spike Jonze and written by Charlie Kaufman, raises many quasi-philosophical questions, the foremost of which is addressed in the film's title. "Being" John Malkovich, or having any identity at all, for that matter, is a complicated issue in this film.

> "The point is that this is a very odd thing. It's supernatural, for lack of a better word. I mean, it raises all sorts of philosophical-type questions, you know, about the nature of self, about the existence of a soul. Am I me? Is Malkovich Malkovich? I had a piece of wood in my hand, Maxine. I don't have it anymore. Where is it? Did it disappear? How could that be? Is it still in Malkovich's head? I don't know. Do you know what a metaphysical can of worms this portal is?"
>
> —Craig Schwartz (John Cusack) in *Being John Malkovich*

When writer Charlie Kaufman first sent his script, *Being John Malkovich,* to producers, he was greeted with much praise but very few offers.[1] "When I wrote it and people read it, people liked it a lot and said they would never make it," he said. "I never expected John Malkovich to read it."[2] *Being John Malkovich* circulated around Hollywood for about two years until director Spike Jonze expressed interest in it. Jonze had built a reputation for funny, unique music videos and commercials. Perhaps more importantly, Jonze is married to Sofia Coppola, daughter of illustrious director Francis Ford Coppola. *Being John Malkovich* had little chance of being made if John Malkovich was unwilling to participate. Francis Ford Coppola called Malkovich and convinced him to meet with Jonze. "In ten years we'll all be working for him," Coppola told the actor.[3] Once Malkovich had signed on, the rest of the cast was easier to recruit. Three years after Jonze agreed to take on the project, *Being John Malkovich* was completed. (In what is probably the strangest testament to the film's popularity and critical acclaim, presidential candidate Al Gore hired Jonze to make a short documentary about a day in campaign life. The thirteen-minute film was shown at the 2000 Democratic National Convention. "He liked *Being John Malkovich* a lot so we talked about that," Jonze said of the Vice President. "I was just hanging out with him and asking him questions."[4])

At least two of Jonze's music videos have played with identity issues. In the music video of the band Weezer's song, "Buddy Holly," Jonze uses digital effects to make the band appear to be on the set of the 70s sit-com "Happy Days." Characters from the original show seem to be dancing with and reacting to the band's performance. The video exemplifies Jonze's ability to blend several layers of intertextuality seamlessly, to condense various fictional and nonfictional aspects into a single presentation. Weezer, a 90s band, sings about a 50s rock icon (Buddy Holly), while performing in a 70s sitcom ("Happy Days") about an idealized vision of the late 50s and early 60s. "Ooo wee ooo, I look just like Buddy Holly," goes the song, "oh, oh, and you're Mary Tyler Moore." Both the song and the video are playing with, among other things, the difference between person and public persona.

Jonze also directed the Beastie Boys in the music video for their song "Sabotage." Jonze had the band pose as actors in a parody of a 70s-style police drama, complete with bad mustaches, Hawaiian shirts, and grainy video quality. In both of these videos, Jonze performs a sort of double-flip with the band's identity. The purpose of a music video is, in part, to help establish a band's stage identity, to create the image a band presents to the public. But Jonze, instead of having band members simply perform in their known (manufactured) stage personas, has them perform as stars of period TV shows. He contrasts the bands' pre-existing public images—what fans know to be Weezer or the Beastie Boys—with other fictional identities, the band as part of the "Happy Days" cast or the cast of a detective drama. So now, each member of the band—Weezer drummer Patrick Wilson, for example—plays two simultaneous roles. Wilson acts as Weezer's drummer and as Weezer's drummer on the set of "Happy Days." The on-screen representation of Wilson is at least twice removed from the "real" Wilson.

In *Being John Malkovich,* Kaufman and Jonze skillfully play with the vagaries of identity, public persona, and "who you say you are." They willfully evoke the well-established public images of Malkovich and of Cameron Diaz. When Kaufman originally wrote

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Craig (John Cusack), Maxine (Catherine Keener), and Lotte (Cameron Diaz) relax after dinner in *Being John Malkovich.*

Being John Malkovich, he had never met Malkovich and had no idea if Malkovich would ever agree to make the movie. Yet he says, "As soon as there was a portal, it went into Malkovich."[5] Both Jonze and Kaufman have said that they couldn't imagine anyone else as the title character. *Being Christopher Walken* or *Being John Turturro*, they feel, just wouldn't have been the same. "We spent weeks trying to think of someone else who could play the role," says Kaufman. "We couldn't think of anyone. He just felt right."[6]

Malkovich fits the film so well because, in part, of the image the public seems to have of him. He is described regularly in reviews with phrases like "quasi-reprehensibleness and enigmatic sexual attraction," "does not seem quite normal or wholesome,"[7] and "ambiguity of both intent and sexuality."[8] Malkovich himself stays out of the limelight—as much as possible for an actor—by avoiding dealings with tabloids and entertainment magazines and by not having a press agent. "I don't really have a relation to this person called 'John Malkovich' who's supposedly in the public domain," Malkovich says. "So I'm already quite removed from 'John Malkovich.' He's not even a cousin once removed."[9]

The character was not intended to be a reflection of the real John Malkovich, but rather of the "idea of Malkovich," the way the public perceives him. The ambiguity, the "quasi-reprehensibleness," and the arrogance all become important facets of the Malkovich in this film. That this Malkovich is fictional is stressed by that fact that he is, in the movie, John *Horatio* Malkovich, whereas in real life his middle name is Gavin. John G. Malkovich is not, as most reviews stated, playing himself—he's playing John H. Malkovich. "I could see someone would think I am like John Malkovich played in the film," he has said. "I'm not particularly."[10] The distinctions between John H. and John G. were clear during filming. "Spike would tell me, 'I don't think John Malkovich would do it that way.'" Malkovich says.[11] Like the depictions of the members of Weezer in Jonze's video, Malkovich plays with the differences between who he is and who people think he is. (This play with identity opposes, in a sense, the purpose of the documentary Jonze shot about Al Gore. Gore's public image is that of a stiff, probably boring man. The convention video attempts to show Gore as different than his public persona, to show the "real" Gore to the public.)

The casting of Cameron Diaz as Craig's decidedly unglamorous wife Lotte plays a similar trick with public image. Diaz, who started out as a fashion model, is generally cast as the glamorous-love-interest or irre-

sistible-beauty. (She has the dubious distinction of being named one of *People* magazine's "50 Most Beautiful People" in 1998.) With a frizzy wig, unflattering outfits, and pasty makeup, Jonze turns the former fashion model into the frowsiest of frowsy characters. The effect that minor cosmetic changes have on her appearance demonstrates both the difference between public persona and person and the malleability of personal identity enabled through changes in physical image. Lotte, who questions the "validity" of her own body (as we shall see later), is played by an actress whose public persona, previously tied to her appearance, is hidden under a bad wardrobe.

Animals and Humans

"You don't know how lucky you are being a chimp," Craig tells the chimp, Elijah, "because consciousness is a terrible curse. I think. I feel. I suffer." The joke here is that Elijah *does* suffer the ill effects of consciousness. He has, according to Lotte, an acid stomach due to stress stemming from some sort of childhood trauma or "feelings of inadequacy as a chimp." Elijah sees a psychotherapist in an effort to resolve the issue. We learn through a flashback that the source of Elijah's trauma is his inability to rescue his parents when they are captured in the jungle. He is later able to rescue Lotte from a similar predicament and thereby, presumably, resolve his inner turmoil.

Parallels between human and animal behavior abound and it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between man and beast. The first voice we hear in the film is Lotte's, calling from off-screen, "Craig, honey, time for bed." Then we fade to Craig lying in bed with a parrot on his head. The parrot mimics Lotte, saying repeatedly, "Craig, honey, time to get up." Lotte has taught the bird, whose name is Orrin Hatch, to say, "Help! She's locking me in a cage," which Lotte herself yells out later when Craig locks her in Elijah's cage. A neighbor, angered by the constant animal noises, occasionally yells, "Shut up!" Both the birds and Craig mimic him and yell, "Shut up!" back. Humans, then, are no more advanced than animals. They are, actually, probably lower than animals—Elijah the monkey seems to be the only noble character in the film. The original script even called for Elijah and Lotte to marry at the end of the film.[12]

Lotte questions the validity of her own body.

Puppets and Humans

Craig's puppets are crucial to the story and nearly become characters themselves. This is emphasized by the way the puppets are treated cinematographically. The puppets are generally shown in extreme close-up, often in shots where only the puppet-theater sets can be seen in the background. Therefore, on screen, the puppets are scale to their world, as are the humans. The effect is further enhanced when Craig controls a life-sized puppet in a dance with a human ballet troupe. The close-ups, the scale, and the design of the puppets (and the way they are lit) allow them a range of expression almost equal to that of the human actors. The puppets are also carefully crafted to look like human characters in the film—Lotte, Craig, and Maxine, specifically.

Craig compares the experience of controlling Malkovich's body to that of puppeteering. Furthermore, his defense of puppeteering to Maxine sounds remarkably like the experience of being Malkovich. About puppeteering he says, "It's the idea of being someone else, of getting inside their skin, seeing what they see, feeling what they feel." Malkovich, says Craig, is "nothing more than another puppet hanging next to my worktable." And it is Craig's skill as a puppeteer that enables him to stay in Malkovich longer than the others.

An important moment in the film that is repeated almost exactly (albeit on a different scale) occurs in the opening scene—"Craig's Dance of Despair and Disillusionment." Craig has the puppet-replica of himself perform an anguished dance that involves sobbing, staring at the strings that control him, and, importantly, smashing a mirror in which he "sees" his own reflection. Later, when Craig has taken control of Malkovich, he makes Malkovich's body perform the dance. At one point, during the puppet-performance of the dance, the

Craig re-creates Maxine as a puppet.

puppet seems to become aware of the strings attached to his body. He follows them up and sees Craig, behind the curtain, controlling him. At that same point in the dance when Malkovich performs it, Malkovich, with Craig controlling him, clutches his stomach as if in pain.

The dance is referred to specifically as "Craig's Dance," highlighting the fact that the puppet and Malkovich contribute nothing other than the physical body for the act. For both, the sight of oneself in a mirror seems to be a source of despair. However, because neither Malkovich nor the puppet "looks" into the mirror or throws the object that breaks it, both their actions and subsequent despair must be Craig's, as the dance's title suggests. Why then, does looking into a mirror cause Craig to despair? In the first version, Craig turns the puppet-replica toward the mirror. In the second version, however, it is Craig himself who turns and looks in the mirror, although he sees through Malkovich's eyes. The despair, then, comes from seeing that he, outwardly, is not himself. While puppeteering, according to Craig, allows you to "get inside someone else's skin, see what they see, feel what they feel," when Craig actually *does* get inside someone else's skin, he only feels his own feelings.

Thus, distinctions between humans and puppets are blurred. In the case of animals, distinctions between types of consciousness become unclear. With the puppets, the very idea of a consciousness at all comes into question. There seems to be no evidence that all humans aren't, like Malkovich, essentially empty inside. As Maxine says, puppeteering is not just playing with dolls, "it's so much more. It's playing with people." People are, in the end, puppets.

In a final twist, Craig is relegated to the role of puppet himself. He enters the portal too late and is pushed into Emily. He cannot, according to the rules governing human portals, escape or control Emily's actions. He stares at Maxine because Emily stares. He has no more control over his life than the puppet-version of him did. The movie opens with the puppet-replica of Craig performing the Dance of Despair and

Disillusionment; it ends with the puppet-like Craig calling out in despair, "Look away, look away."

Trappings of Identity

The big question the film raises is, if you can simply pass through a door, enter someone else's body, and take over his life, what constitutes identity? As the body itself is no longer a reliable means of identification, it has become entirely objectified—it is a "vessel" or a "really expensive suit." "Jesus," Craig asks while in Malkovich, "why couldn't I have found the portal to a younger body?" The body itself is not essential to the personal identity.

Gender, as a trait of the now-interchangeable body, becomes a form of identity that may not always coincide with the internal experience of self. When Lotte experiences life through Malkovich, she says it "felt right, you know?" She decides that she is a transsexual and that she wants to go through sexual reassignment surgery. Lotte craves the results of having a male exterior—a strong, deep voice, the sexual advances of women, etc.—because she feels that they match her internal feelings, the way she perceives herself to be. After Lotte has gone through the portal, both she and Craig make reference to her male genitalia, even when she is not in Malkovich's body. "You gave up that claim after the first time you stuck your dick in Maxine," Craig says. Lotte responds to a threat from Craig by saying, "Suck my dick!"

Lotte is the only female with whom we experience Malkovich. Malkovich, however, crosses gender lines when, in the most dramatic and bizarre scene, he enters the portal to his own consciousness. The result is that everyone he sees, male or female, is himself, and every word spoken or written is "Malkovich." Malkovich orders Malkovich from the menu and Malkovich, the waiter, responds, "Malkovich." Malkovich lounges on top of a grand piano, clad in a red evening dress, crooning, "Malkovich, Malkovich," while Malkovich plays the piano. The idea of gender as a fixed feature of identity has become questionable.

Malkovich's self can be either male or female, but his body is male. Lotte, while in Malkovich, gets Maxine pregnant, thereby becoming "the father, the other mother, whatever." But it is Lotte, not Malkovich or Lester (now in Malkovich) who eventually takes on the role of "father, the other mother." Maxine says the baby is Lotte's, even after Lotte has left Malkovich. Fatherhood has become somehow tied to the person rather than to a physical body.

Maxine is comfortable in her body.

Kaufman and Jonze are not content with abandoning only the physical body as a form of identity. Every possible means of identification comes into question. The one trait that Malkovich has that makes people want to be him is that he is famous. "I've been thinking . . . is this Malkovich fellow appealing?" Maxine asks Craig. "Of course, Maxine," Craig replies. "He's a celebrity." Malkovich is saddled with celebrity status even though no one in the film can seem to think of a single movie he has made. Celebrity status, far from helping define Malkovich as a person, becomes meaningless. He is a celebrity like Lotte is a woman or Lester is Lester. Those who pass through the portal are, as Andy Warhol predicted, famous for fifteen minutes. And fame here is as empty as it would be if Warhol's prediction were to come true. Yet, this does not diminish the enjoyment Craig and Maxine's clients derive from their moments inside the actor. The first client to pass through experiences Malkovich eating leftover Chinese food and ordering a bath mat. He is, however, clearly ecstatic about his experience when he is dropped by the side of the New Jersey Turnpike. Fame is a label, and as such it is malleable, transferable, and misunderstood.

Craig realizes he can use Malkovich's "existing notoriety" to launch his puppeteering career. The skills that Craig has as an artist do not change when he enters Malkovich, but the fame attached to Malkovich now allows those skills to be appreciated. The notoriety Malkovich has achieved for his acting can just as easily be attached to something else. Fame, then, is a trapping of identity, one associated with the external representation of a person, while skill or talent is internal and tied to the essential self.

Names are constantly changed, misunderstood, commandeered, or withheld. The primary examples of this are Craig and Lester's separate assumptions of Malkovich's name when they enter him. As a symbol of their dominance over his body, they take on his name. "I'm John Malkovich," says Craig in his debut performance as Malkovich the Puppeteer. "I'm really John Malkovich." And when Lester and his companions establish final control of the body, they say, "We're Malk . . . We're Malkovich."

Only two characters do not willfully enter the portal or fundamentally change identity—Maxine and Elijah the monkey. Subsequently, the names of these two are more fixed, more permanently bound to their selves. Craig, in a desperate flirtation with Maxine, bets that he can guess her name. "Buuuhhppaahhhhnnn . . . Muhhhahhhhh . . . Mahhhnnnaaa . . . nollltuuukkkaaaaralllll . . . tashabararasssss . . . suuuuusaaaaaaannnnnnaaaaaannnn nnnnncccccceeeeeee . . . Mwaaaaaa . . . Mahhhhhkkkkk . . . ssseeeeeen. Maxine?" he says. Later, at a bar, Craig says her name repeatedly, often several times in the same sentence. "Maxine, Maxine. I made it, Maxine. Buy you a drink, Maxine, Maxine?" he says. It is as though her name is an inescapable quality of her self. Similarly, Elijah is Elijah throughout. In a flashback explaining the source of his anxiety, Elijah's parents in the wild call him Elijah as well. His "real" name and the name he is given as a pet are somehow the same. The two characters whose identities are never in question are also the two whose names are never questioned.

When Malkovich enters his own portal, "Malkovich" has become the only available word and Malkovich's name, the label of his identity, has become everything. It is an actor's narcissism taken to the furthest extreme. It is also an examination of the problems that arise when a name becomes an aspect of identity. It is the opposite of what happens to the names Elijah and Maxine. If anyone or anything can "be" Malkovich, "Malkovich" as a name loses all meaning. There is no linguistic way to distinguish between Malkovich, his date, and the broiled fish on the menu.

What is at play here, as with the names of other characters, is the rift between signifier and signified. Craig, by entering Malkovich's body and taking control of it, is appropriating certain signifiers—the body, the name, the fame—and forcing them to refer to another signified, Craig's self. When Malkovich enters his own portal, he sees that he is *only* signifier, no signified. And for Elijah and Maxine—who alone don't have the identity crises the other characters have—signifier always matches signified.

Self-identification, *aside from* naming, becomes crucial as characters pass from one body to another. Characters who travel through the portal into Malkovich announce their identities regularly. Through simple, declarative sentences, they state their professions, genders, or other aspects of themselves that are fundamental to their beings. "I'm a puppeteer," Craig says on a number of occasions. Later, when he has taken over Malkovich's body, he declares his dominance over Malkovich— "I'm no longer an actor," he tells his (Malkovich's) agent. "I'm a puppeteer." Lotte has a sexual awakening while in Malkovich and afterwards tells Craig, "I'm a transsexual." Similarly, Lester declares that he is not Lester; he is Captain Mertin and Lester was another "vessel." With these declarations, the characters are asserting that their identities are fixed, are separate from "how they are perceived as persons by others," whether they are in Malkovich's body or, as in Lotte's case, their own. *Self*-identification becomes the only fixed means of identification.

Those who want to pass through the portal and "be someone else" are constantly verbally reaffirming who they are. Maxine, on the other hand, makes few declarative statements. As the one human character that seems comfortable with her identity, she apparently feels no need to declare it to others. "Do you know that I don't even know your name or where you work?" Craig asks her. "Yeah," she replies wryly. For her alone, the difference between who she says she is and how she is perceived by others is never an issue.

First Person and the Body

One of the most important aspects of the film is the means by which Jonze creates the sensation of entering Malkovich. When a character enters Malkovich, we see events from his or her point of view *through* Malkovich. Visually, the effect is achieved through the use of a cutout, a filter that limits the field of vision. It is as though we, the audience, are a step back from Malkovich's eyes. At the end of the film, when Craig is trapped in the consciousness of Malkovich's daughter Emily, the field of vision is even smaller. Craig, who can't control the actions of Emily, is another step back from the "surface." Audio effects are used in a similar fashion to create a sensation of being inside Malkovich's body. The sound has a muffled quality and background music is absent. Malkovich, when he speaks, sounds to the audience as he might sound to

himself if he were wearing earplugs. We hear him chew toast or scratch his head as it would sound to him. When Craig is trapped in Emily, exterior sounds are muffled and almost inaudible.

Jonze uses these devices to create moments of simulated first-person experience. He removes Malkovich from the screen and creates the illusion of seeing through his eyes. Thus, when a character enters Malkovich (but Malkovich retains control of his body) we see what that character sees, which is whatever Malkovich sees. The character has not *become* Malkovich, however, he is just taking a ride *in* Malkovich. For example, when Lotte enters Malkovich while he is dining with Maxine, both Lotte and Malkovich have their own, individual reactions to the experience. Both separately find themselves attracted to her. Thus the first-person point-of-view camera shot "through" Malkovich's eyes actually highlights the fact that Lotte is not "being" John Malkovich. The filter stresses the fact that both Lotte and Malkovich are present, that they have not merged—it is Lotte's point of view, not Malkovich's, that we are shown. (Maxine is aware of the fact that Malkovich and Lotte are separate. "Do you have any idea what it's like," she cruelly asks Craig, "to have two people looking at you with total lust and devotion through the same pair of eyes?")

When Malkovich (and Lotte) and Maxine have sex, Maxine calls out, "I love you, Lotte." The point-of-view during the exchange switches from Lotte's perspective—inside Malkovich—to a neutral, third person perspective outside Malkovich and back. When Maxine first calls out, "Lotte," we see and hear it from inside Malkovich. Then we cut to an external (as in outside Malkovich's body) shot for his reaction. "Did you just call me Lotte?" he asks. "Yeah, do you mind?" Maxine asks. "No, not really," he replies. Then we cut back to Lotte's point of view. Maxine has not, of course, called Malkovich "Lotte"—she was talking to Lotte inside him. The fact that we switch to an external shot for Malkovich's reaction stresses the fact that his reaction and Lotte's are separate.

Once Craig takes control of Malkovich's body, we are no longer given constant access to the internal point of view shot. Craig is no longer simply riding *in* Malkovich, he has actually *become* Malkovich. Instead of seeing what he sees, we are only given occasional glimpses, brief shots of objects he is seeing. The last time we see through Malkovich's eyes, he (with Craig at the helm) is sitting in a bar, debating whether to leave Malkovich's body to save Maxine's life. A drunk comes up at that moment and asks him if he is Malkovich. He denies that he is, the drunk insists, and a fight ensues. By seeing through the cutout at that moment, we are made aware of Craig's dilemma. He is debating whether to continue to "be" Malkovich or to return to being himself. (He decides after the fight to leave Malkovich's body. Similarly, early in the film, he decides to leave puppeteering for a while and take a job after getting in a fight on the street. In both cases, then, a physical act is the impetus for an identity change.) Finally, when Craig becomes trapped in Emily, we again see through her eyes, a simulated first-person point of view, although more removed, as discussed above. Craig is trapped in Emily, but he is not Emily.

Craig's entry through the portal into Emily is the final action in a series of moves that take Craig into increasingly confined spaces. In the beginning of the film, he shares a packed, claustrophobic apartment with Lotte and dozens of pets. He becomes employed on the 7th floor of the Mertin-Flemmer building, a floor built between two other floors, supposedly to accommodate the workplace needs of midgets—it's ceilings are half as high as those on normal floors. On that abbreviated floor, Craig finds a door, small even compared to other doors on the half-floor. The door leads him first to the small space inside Malkovich, and finally into the even smaller space inside Malkovich's daughter. It is, in a sense, the opposite of what happens to Stephen Hawking in *A Brief History of Time* (Morris, 1992) and Scott Carey in *The Incredible Shrinking Man* (Arnold, 1957). For those two "shrinking" protagonists, their ever-smaller place in a growing universe provides them with a greater understanding of the world around them. By the end of those films, when

Craig is one in a long history of shrinking protagonists.

the protagonists have shrunk to near-nothingness, they are closer than ever to enlightenment. Craig, on the other hand, does not shrink, does not diminish relative to the rest of the world. He simply becomes confined to smaller and smaller places. And the smaller his universe gets, the smaller his perspective gets. With each progressive step, he becomes more and more obsessed with Maxine and oblivious to her feelings and the feelings of his wife, Lotte. Craig takes control of Malkovich to win Maxine, and leaves him only because he thinks it will enable him to win her back. Finally, from the most confined space of all—trapped, powerless, inside Emily—he sees both Maxine and his wife. He calls out, futilely, "Maxine, Maxine. I love you, Maxine." Like Hawking and Carey, Craig has become impossible to see. Unlike them, he has gained no insight, has come no closer to enlightenment.

A fetish, according to Freud, is that which plugs an intolerable gap. Those who use Malkovich's body to plug intolerable gaps in their lives—Craig, Lester, Lotte—are fetishisizing him, objectifying him. When the subject Malkovich is removed, the object Malkovich is removed as well. It is only when there is an acknowledged, accepted subject controlling the body —whether it is Malkovich himself, Craig, or Lester— that we the audience can see that body. Interestingly, at those moments when the audience is privileged to Malkovich's point-of-view, the character who has entered Malkovich disappears as well. We, the audience, are now objectifying and fetishisizing that missing character—using him to fill our need to see what the experience of being John Malkovich is like.

"The postmodern subject," says Terry Eagleton, "unlike its Cartesian ancestor, is one whose body is integral to its identity."[13] In *Being John Malkovich,* the body is gone and identity is essentially meaningless. Kaufman and Jonze remove physical bodies from the screen and replace them with a black hole through which the world is experienced. It is a world in which humans are hollow, are nothing more than animals or puppets. The characters who enter Malkovich are desperate to change identities, to be known to others as "someone else." Kaufman and Jonze force us to wonder whether such a thing as an identity that anyone but oneself can know exists at all.

Scott Repass has a master's degree in Liberal Studies from the City University of New York Graduate School and University Center. He currently lives in Texas, where he works as a carpenter and welder.

Notes

1. Unless otherwise noted, all information regarding the genesis of this film came from the following sources: Carol Allen ("In the Opaque Mind of an Invisible Man," *The Times (London),* March 16, 2000, 1-3), Tom Carson ("The Last Great Movie of the Century," *Esquire* 132, no.1, October 1999), Mark Healy ("Being Spike Jonze," *Bazaar,* November 1999, 146-148), Lynn Hirschberg ("Being Charlie Kaufman," *The New York Times,* March 19, 2000), Alexandra Marshall ("Inside John Malkovich," *The American Prospect* 11, no. 4, January 3, 2000, 50-1), John Mount ("How to Get a Head in Movies," *Sight and Sound* 10, no. 3, March 2000, 12-13), John Patterson (Being Charlie Kaufman: Off-Hollywood's Quiet Man," *LA Weekly,* October 29, 1999), Peter Stack ("Spike Jonze's Pursuit of a Bizarre Dream," *San Francisco Chronicle,* November 13, 1999), Theo Tait ("Inside the Headcase," *Times Literary Supplement,* March 24, 2000, 23), and Alona Wartofsky ("A Jonze for Inventiveness: The Video Director, Shooting for the Hip," *Washington Post,* October 24, 1999).
2. Barbara Vancheri, "Quirky Twists Surprised Even 'Malkovich' Screenwriter," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette,* (May 1, 2000, Sooner edition): C1. Kaufman had written, among other things, short films for the absurd comedian Chris Elliott that were shown on "Late Night with David Letterman" and for Elliott's subsequent, short-lived sit-com, "Get a Life."
3. Peter Kobel, "The Fun and Games of Living a Virtual Life," *The New York Times* (October 24, 1999, Late Edition): Sec. 2, p. 15.
4. Lorenza Munoz, "For Gore Film, Staff Sought the Man Behind 'Malkovich,'" *Los Angeles Times* (August 18, 2000): F26.
5. Vancheri, C1.
6. Kobel, 15.
7. Chris Chang, "Head Wide Open," *Film Comment* (September/October, 1999): 6-9.
8. Jan Stuart, "Being John Malkovich," *The Advocate* (November 9, 1999): 67.
9. Kobel, 15.
10. James Mottran, "He Must Be Off His Head," *Scotland on Sunday* (November 21, 1999): 2.
11. Kobel, 2.
12. Dana Franklin, "Movie Scripts," *The Daily Scrip* (January 2001) <http://www.dailyscript.com.>.
13. Dana Eagleton, *The Illusions of Postmodernism* (Malden, MA: 1996).

Naomi Watts and Laura Elena Harring as Betty and Rita in *Mulholland Drive.*

Mulholland Drive

Director/Writer: David Lynch. Producers: Mary Sweeney, Alain Sarde, Neal Edelstein, Michael Porlair, Tony Krantz, Pierre Edelman. Cinematographer: Peter Deming. Universal.

In *Mulholland Drive,* David Lynch pushes forward his ongoing investigation of the human condition and the ways in which learned habits of mind not only fail to support our needs, but often loom as frightening adversaries in our struggle to cope. As a matter of course, Lynch centers himself in the expansive energy of the dreaming subconscious and looks with sadness, horror, and confusion at the (often darkly comic) grotesque results of the tyranny of a very reductive form of reason fabricated by our culture. Nevertheless, despair is not a feature of Lynch's cinematic universes. Help always resides in the highest reaches of the human imagination in the forms of dreams and visions, as in those of the sublime, albeit doomed detective, Dale Cooper (Kyle MacLachlan) in "Twin Peaks." If vision is always shadowed by the imbalances and aggressions in the lower, toxic depths of the imagination, provoked by the despotism of manufactured culture, each new film gives Lynch a new opportunity to spur his audiences toward the vision that arrives when we depart from standard procedures and cross beyond the narrow confines of what a too restricted world thinks of as reality. Now, in *Mulholland Drive,* he woos us again, with a Hollywood fable.

Although, in his latest film, Lynch ostensibly sets his sights specifically on Hollywood, the contempt he heaps on its ludicrous power structure conveys the heinous absurdity of the entire entertainment industry, and with such vigor, that it is no wonder that ABC, seeing its face in this dark mirror, pulled away from it in its earlier incarnation as a television series.[1] *Mulholland Drive,* however, is much more than a literal expose of commercialism. It is a visionary epic about the cosmic degeneration that originates in the thwarting of the creative act by the mechanistic forces of

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commercialism, and an affirmation of Lynch's belief in the abundance of robust creative potential in mass culture. Hollywood often plausibly referred to as the "dream factory," makes a perfect setting for the drama of the lethal implications of the loss of creative freedom. The malignant oppression of "dream" by "factory" is represented in the film by a criminal cartel that controls Hollywood production and thereby brings on the catastrophe that is Lynch's subject, as he, predictably, weighs in on the side of dreams.

In *Mulholland Drive*, Lynch continues to pursue dreams by making the logical temporal, spatial, and psychological mechanisms of ordinary narrative defer to dream non-logic, which reflects the malleability of time, space, and identity. Certainly, there is something in the way of an ordinary through-line in the film's story of Betty Elms (Naomi Watts), who comes to Hollywood from a small town in Canada dreaming of movie stardom and does not succeed. However, this is not the usual indictment of tinseltown. Yes, Betty begins with everything that it takes—including the requisite perky blonde charm, the talent, and the connections—to "make it," and, yes, even all these assets cannot win her the brass ring in a corrupt industry. But Betty does not undergo reversals in a cause-and-effect plot. The initial events of the film simply evaporate two-thirds of the way through, and the characters turn inside out. A spatial black hole opens in the film in the form of a dark passage into a mysterious blue box, which pops up in various scenes, an ineffable portal available suddenly and every so often. At a crucial moment in the film, Betty and the audience sink into the darkness within the blue object and emerge into a nightmare of catastrophic disappointment so total that the initially fortunate Betty is transformed into a cursed soul. But not only does she re-emerge from the blue box with a newly darkened destiny and depressed psychology; she also has a different name, Diane Selwyn, although in an earlier scene Betty has already confronted the corpse of a woman of that name quite distinct from herself (credited as Lyssie Powell). The film is awash in the instability of the ordinary points of rational reality for Betty.[2] What has this to do with not making it in Hollywood?

Central to our grasp of Betty's problems is that she is not alone in the experience of uncanny shifts. Her tale unfolds as three almost simultaneous events begin the film: Betty's arrival in Los Angeles; a car crash that saves a mysterious, dark woman (Laura Elena Harring) from being the victim of a hit in a limousine on Mulholland Drive; and a preproduction meeting between movie director Adam Kesher (Justin Theroux) and the laconic Castigliane Brothers (Dan Hedaya and Angelo Badalamenti), two thugs replete with the wardrobe and props of movie Mafiosi, who dictate to the defiant director the terms under which he will be permitted to make his film: a stock ingenue named Camilla Rhodes *will be the star*. At first, the film seems to have a comic trajectory. The "dark lady," who may or may not be an actress, is rendered amnesiac by the crash, but seems to be on the road to regaining her identity when she accidentally meets Betty; upbeat Betty is sweetly determined to help her new friend, who comically adopts the name Rita after seeing a poster for *Gilda,* featuring a picture of Rita Hayworth. Adam's adversaries, the Castiglianes and an equally bizarre Western figure called the Cowboy (Lafayette Montgomery), are so grotesquely hilarious that it is hard to believe that they will pose any real problems for him. But the comedy that comes of their impenetrable monomania about the leading lady for Adam's film has a desperately serious subtext. Adam, like Betty, also undergoes a morbid sea change, though his name remains stable. Beginning the film as a levelheaded Hollywood director struggling to keep control of his movie, he ends as a hollow shell of a man. Moreover, the adorably befuddled dark, sultry "Rita" ends the film as Camilla Rhodes, now a dark, sultry, vampiric diva, although Camilla Rhodes has previously appeared in a completely different form, that of a cute blonde. These discontinuities confound our rational expectations for a narrative experience. Surely, logic insists, one of the characters, probably Betty, is dreaming a bright Hollywood wish-fulfillment fantasy that is dispersed by a terrible Hollywood reality of failure. But such a reading would make the film a facile critique of the Byzantine problems of success and self in Hollywood, and *Mulholland* is anything but facile. Rather it presents the unique Lynchian rendition of the dream's perspective on mechanism, here a mass-market machine that feeds on genuine, not imaginary, creative impulses and turns them into waste products.

Mulholland Drive propels the audience through a set of disorienting transformations in order to follow the life of creative integrity to its demise, an issue of life and death importance to David Lynch. Such an extinction is not, according to this film, a single event, but the devastation of the web of interconnection that supports a secure reality; an onslaught against the very stability on which time and space depends. There are cosmic implications when Adam is coerced by the criminal power structure lurking behind the visible apparatus of Hollywood in a sterile inner sanctum accessible to very few. The absurd Castiglianes and the

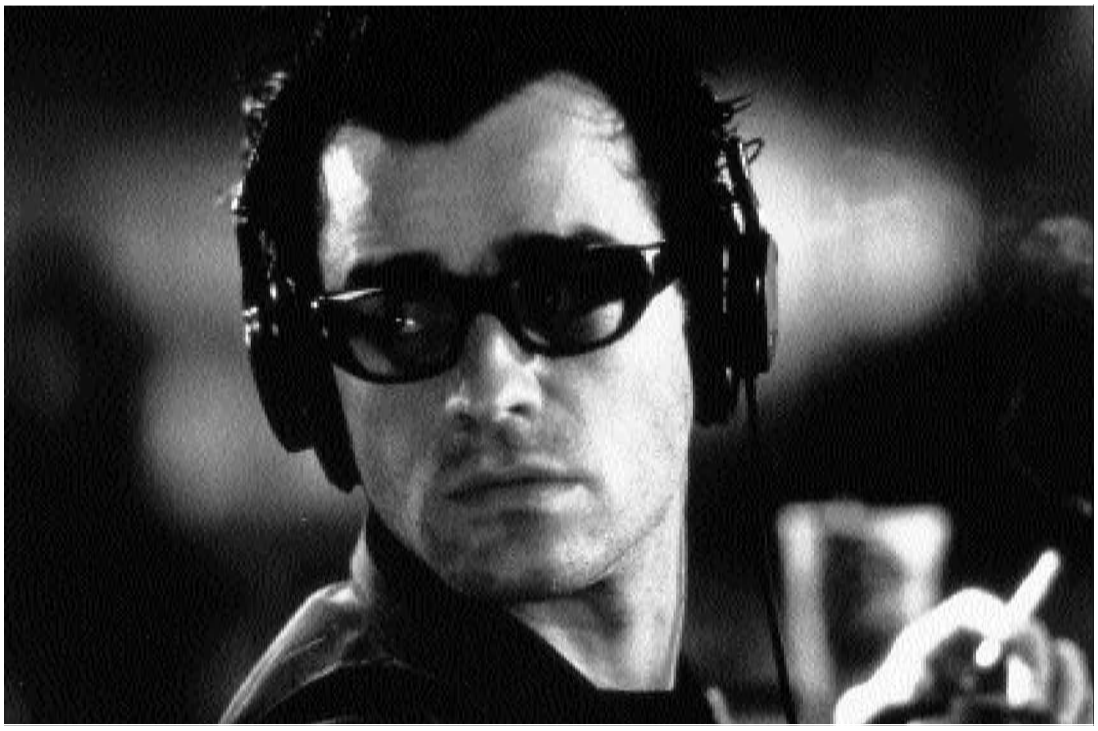
Michael J. Anderson as Mr. Roque.

Cowboy are the mere emissaries of a totally isolated, almost completely silent figure, a Mr. Roque (Michael J. Anderson). Roque, the organization kingpin, exists only in a glass-enclosed office, immaculately detached from Adam's film, a lord of a static-void cut off from the ebb and flow of creative energy. He and his emissaries are exercises in pure dominating will that stymies any form of organic development. (Camilla Rhodes is their choice for no discernible reason, not even the usual casting-couch or box-office issues.) How crucial is their relentless desire to dominate Adam's project? The Roque/Castigliane/Cowboy axis is deadly. Roque's is the silence that is the death of popular culture in its most far-reaching sense.

Mulholland Drive is Lynch's own *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) though it is neither a remake or an imitation of Billy Wilder's remarkable saga of the dark side of the movies, which is, if not Lynch's favorite film, at least one of the masterpieces of classical Hollywood that he holds in the highest esteem. *Mulholland* is a revision, Lynch's unique account of what held Wilder's attention too: human putrefaction (a term Lynch used several times during his press conference at the New York Film Festival 2001) in a city of lethal illusions. Lynch adds another dimension to *his* journey: his hard-won optimism about making movies. Unlike the pessimistic Wilder, Lynch believes the culture industry has options for producing authentic public dreams.

In my five years of interviews with Lynch, I have gleaned the importance he places on an optimism that most critics overlook; Lynch's depiction of the dark side is easily accessible, perhaps because it is connected with willful action, something with which our culture is comfortable. But in each Lynch film there is also a strong intimation of a force for good that occurs when the human will is relaxed or even abdicated, and for most of his career Lynch has celebrated the power of this force. From *Eraserhead* to *Fire Walk with Me,* Lynch's protagonists have in some *involuntary* manner had their chance for a modicum of victory over oppressive social structures. *Mulholland Drive* represents a new direction for Lynch, however, one that he began in *Lost Highway,* a new concern with protagonists who miss their moment. Yet, even his tales of missed opportunities conserve hope.

Lynch signals us immediately that life and death, defeat and hope, are fused in his tale of Hollywood, as the crucial main title sequence establishes a tone of simultaneous aspiration and angst. The initial black screen yields to a scene of dread, an anonymous figure trembling underneath a blanket in a dismal bedroom desaturated of color; later we will learn that this is the scene of Betty's suicide. We then cut to the inversion of this image, a saturated color visualization of a crowded dance floor populated by leaping, smiling teenagers; later we will learn that this is the dance contest that brought Betty to Hollywood. Inversion of extremes will structure the film to come. Similarly, the compression and destabilization of time and space will mark the rest of the film, as will the reference to the clear artifice of filmic representations: the crowded, pulsating dancing group is peopled by *doppelgängers* of several of the same couples while shadows, black cutouts of gyrating couples, move among them against a monochromatic background, instead of the context of some recognizable space. Into this complex of forms bursts a luminosity that also turns out to be Betty. The main title sequence foreshadows a stubborn belief in



Justin Theroux as Adam Kesher.

radiance even after depravity has taken its toll, and the conflation of death and life that will characterize *Mulholland Drive* as it did the beginning of *Sunset Boulevard,* though it is rendered with much greater liberty and audacity than the speaking corpse of Joe Gillis (William Holden) in the opening of Wilder's film. And there I leave Wilder. Pushing the analogies to *Sunset Boulevard* in this film and its overt allusions to it—the Sunset Boulevard street sign at the beginning of *Mulholland,* or Lynch's shots of Betty's courtyard that evoke his favorite of Wilder's shots, the courtyard of Norma Desmond's (Gloria Swanson) house—would not be a productive strategy. Rather, the relationship of the two films measures the distance between their interpretations of the tradition of reflexive Hollywood movies, the immensity of the creative leaps Lynch has taken off the springboard of the best of his forerunners.

The interconnected stories of Betty, Rita, and Adam glitter briefly in isolation until Lynch links them, challenging all that audiences have been conditioned to expect about multi- plot narratives. The linkages are elliptical, shot through with a number of comic and grotesque subplots involving minor characters that emphasize both dreams and criminal violence. For some time, Adam seems to have nothing to do with the women, except that ominous men resonant of the world of the Castiglianes pursue him and Rita alike. However, the Castiglianes form more of a nexus among the three than is initially apparent. Adam's compliance with their demands about the casting of Camilla Rhodes is the irrevocable turning point in all their lives. Ironically, the most important link among them is the connection that is pointedly *not* made, that between Adam and Betty.

The multiple ramifications of Adam's capitulation surprise the film with the kind of connections predicted by Chaos Theory, which explores how the beating of a butterfly's wings affects the weather half way around the world. Herein Lynch requires that we read differently than we ordinarily do, because he does not provide us with the conventional line of cause-and-effect. Rather he asks us to ride the snaking spirals of a vortex of energies. Because Adam falls, and is prevented from meeting her, Betty's cheerful expectations, both about her career and about her ability to help Rita, enter a black hole. But that does not mean that Betty's original, flakey euphoria is not real. She is, rather, oblivious to the unseen forces that no one in the film understands and over which no one has control. These forces strike with Adam's capitulation. Betty never knows what has hit her. Indeed by the time she has been hit, she isn't Betty anymore, but a new entity spawned by the destruction of her dreams.

Betty's dire transformation, and all the others, moving through a space of darkness rather than cause-

and-effect, is a form of typical Lynchian dream logic. And at the deepest level of our beings, we know that this transformation has taken place for all of us in subconscious darkness, more or less desperately varying with our circumstances. In life we maintain continuous signs of identity, like our names. But our young, inexperienced dreams routinely undergo such transformations, as they collide with forces unleashed by power establishments and our own internal obsessions, that a new name and identity would be entirely in keeping with the profound alterations in us, especially the commutation of early assumptions about our possibilities. Betty's sea change is catastrophic, and it is not only about her. Beginning in someone else's life, it hits just when all her dreams seem magically on the brink of fulfillment. Betty is fresh from a very successful audition when she fleetingly intersects with Adam on a sound stage. He is ostensibly conducting auditions, but is actually waiting—to be confronted by Camilla Rhodes (in the first third of the film a blonde, slick version of Betty) and to speak the code words of submission, "This is the girl."

Betty's appearance on Adam's set is a sophisticated, visionary re-reading of the extremely familiar plot point in movies about making shows or movies when the director is struck immediately by an unknown girl whom he catapults to stardom. We have laughed at that cliché in *42nd Street,* but we have not forgotten it. By giving us a story in which the failure of that moment of inspiration does not take place, Lynch reveals why. What has long been thought of as a tired old cliché is revealed here as a lighthearted expression of a very meaningful part of the entertainment industry: the necessary moment of creation which is unexpected, unplanned, and makes possible the vitality of mass culture. Betty represents that unexpected moment for Adam, but he is too intimidated to seize the fresh energy she brings with her that is necessary to his work and to his life as well.

If Adam is already compromised as Betty arrives, she seems on the threshold of wonderful possibilities. Her audition, which precedes the meeting that does not take place, is extraordinarily high comedy in which Betty shows her acting stuff for a bunch of hacks, paired with a has-been matinee idol, Woody Katz (Chad Everett). Her reading creates something—a dangerously erotic mood—out of absolutely nothing. The lines Betty is given are utterly cliched, the directions she receives from the director are meaningless, and her scene partner is made up of equal parts of snake oil and suntan. Her triumphant seizure of victory from the jaws of inanity is a distillation of the lowest form of the "magic" of mass-market movies, a chemistry that appears out of the blue without either warning or significance.

As Betty and Adam graze each other's narrative trajectories, they intersect momentarily in a mutual gaze when Adam turns to see Betty for the first time. A sequence unlike any other in *Mulholland,* this interlocking gaze is a part of a long history of similar gazes in the films of David Lynch that goes all the way back to *Eraserhead*. It is the shock of authentic contact, the Lynchian site of what is most precious in human life, and one of the few interactions in his filmic universes endowed with the power to pierce hollow social forms. For most of Lynch's career, he has celebrated the power of this gaze, and here in *Mulholland,* it is the one rush of authentic energy in a world of dry husks and violent

Adam and Rita/Camilla share a travesty of romance.

Mr. Roque is the lord of a static-void.

manipulation. In *Lost Highway,* Lynch began to explore a situation in which its abundance of meaning is overwhelmed by the power of solipsistic emptiness. In *Mulholland,* he returns to that new direction, showing us very clearly the precise moment of spiritual atrophy. When Betty leaves the set, when Adam does not call her back, it is the end of Betty's life, although her suicide does not take place until much later; it is also the moment when Adam's already tenuous hold on emotional life is destroyed, although it will not be until much later that he reaches full petrification as a brittle shell. It is at this moment that the offbeat comedy of the sinister silence loses its funny edge. The silence of the sublime gaze was the portal, now closed, to the finer reaches of the imagination. The wrong silence, Mr. Roque's, wins.

The denied entrance into the film's narrative of the character's higher form of imagination has consequences for them and the film itself, but mostly for the detective role the audience is called on to play. There is no one in the film's diegesis, like Dale Cooper, to anchor us in the courage and faith needed to inhabit the high reaches of intuition. From this point on, we must assert that power on our own as the main characters descend into the decomposition of the self-enclosed imagination, because the fertile higher form of intuitive leaps has been barred from their lives. We must make the leaps as we bear witness to them. The toxic trajectory begins as Betty (instead of meeting Adam) drags a timid Rita to the house of a woman named Diane Selwyn, because the name has popped into Rita's mind, and they both hope that it is a clue to Rita's forgotten identity. But the discovery of Diane Selwyn's corpse is the discovery of Betty's identity, now that whatever might have happened between her and Adam has been prohibited.

The narrative turn into a sterile solipsism has started at the top with Mr. Roque but has worked its way down into the mockery of Betty's hopeful mobilization of Rita to find Diane Selwyn. At the sight of Selwyn's corpse, Betty and Rita each literally fan out into multiple images of themselves, as if layers of their personhood were being shaken apart. And they are. Back at Betty's apartment, the layers are reconfigured as Rita takes on Betty's appearance by covering her luxuriant, dark hair with a short, blonde wig. The narrative excuse for this is that Rita is fearful that the murder of Selwyn means that the thugs chasing her are

getting closer. But the tonal weight of this image is the move of Rita into Betty's place as the dominant personality, which she becomes when Betty invites her to share the bed rather than sleep on the couch and Rita initiates sex.

After this lesbian encounter, there is another development in the shift of realities and power; Rita is in charge, and a dominant Rita is the victory of the crime cartel. For Rita is now on her way to assuming the identity of Camilla Rhodes, the girl chosen by detached political power rather than by the organic shock of creative intuition. Confusion about identity contains the possibility of discovery. False identity is the end of possibility and the beginning of disintegration. That process, begun as the women lose coherence outside of Selwyn's bungalow, becomes critical in Club Silencio, an after-hours nightspot to which Rita takes Betty. Club Silencio—its stage enclosed by red curtains featuring a poorly attended, shabby show—is not the pathetic operation it seems to be. The portal through which Rita and Betty travel to the next stage of their blighted lives, Club Silencio will remind Lynch aficionados of the Red Room in "Twin Peaks," a place, as I have established elsewhere, that alters depending on who enters it.[3] For Betty and Rita, it is a site of disintegration.

The show at Club Silencio, the most original and stunning sequence in an original and stunning film, directs attention to its insubstantiality and silence; no one on stage produces the sounds they seem to produce. We hear a band, but there is no band; every sound is a recording. Nor are the apparently present bodies really there. They disappear and appear abruptly, illusions of sight and sound in a reality of silence. The most powerful of these silences is obliquely rendered by Rebekah Del Rio, singing a Spanish translation of Roy Orbison's "Crying." As Del Rio sings (a cappella) the lyrics, which speak of "crying for your death," Rita and Betty clutch each other and weep copiously at this revelation. The presentation of an American song in a "foreign" language drives home the difference of this exotic turf where illusion confesses the insubstantiality of its seeming solidity. Del Rio, a seemingly sensual, full-bodied presence, at one point collapses like a hollow doll, while her rich voice continues to intone. The issue here may seem to some to be about life and death, but it is actually about fullness and the void, as is the entire film. Confronted by hollowed-out image, Betty goes into heaving convulsions. She is coming further unglued and when the two return to the apartment, Betty disappears, as does Rita, after she opens the blue box which has been previously glimpsed but never before peered into.

The blue box, empty, does not represent anything, the question a rationally trained audience will puzzle over. It *is* the darkness that has been waiting since the beginning of the film, foreshadowed by a mysterious blue key initially discovered in Rita's purse, which she cannot identify, ostensibly because of her amnesia. It will be helpful to mention here that Lynch does not see darkness as a morally negative space, but as a space of the unknown of the subconscious from which anything, both the marvelous and the terrible, can emerge. From the moment when Adam and Betty do not meet what emerges from the darkness is destined to be terrible because the betrayal of Adam's creative choices has rendered the unknown toxic.

This is a mesmerizing representation of the condition of film production, one may protest, which always involves the allure of what is absent in substance. It would be possible (and reasonable) to argue that on this basis the potentially fruitful meeting of Adam and Betty can never take place: the conditions of film production by nature mandate illusion not substance. And yet the breathtaking, indeterminate presentation of that moment—there is a tremulous instant when we are not sure whether or not Adam will turn toward Betty—suggests, as have Lynch's previous films, that popular culture can provide a fullness of meaning even though or perhaps *because* it is an imaginary signifier (to borrow a term from Christian Metz). There was a moment in this process when fullness might have been married to the images of popular culture. The question for Lynch is always whether the imaginary connects with something beyond itself or languishes in the void of solipsism.

Diane Selwyn, the detritus of Betty that remains after the immersion in the darkness of a depleted imaginative vision, inhabits a room desaturated of color: we have found the trembling figure of the main title and know it to be the impoverishment of the initial possibilities. In the room there is only one object rich in color, a blue key, the same color as the mysterious triangular key and the blue box it opens, but here in the shape of an ordinary latchkey, a key only to the most reduced level of reality, not the possibilities of the darkness within the blue box. Narratively, this is established as the sign that the contract killer has killed Rita/Camilla for Betty/Diane. Yet narrative is now unfocused. Diane, Camilla, and Adam continue to play out the incidents that lead to this conclusion. Time and space have come unglued, along with the identities of the three leading characters. Pieces of time and space are splayed along with the wages of compromised spiritual wholeness. Betty/Diane and Rita/Camilla now

Rita/Camilla's identity is in question.

share a sadistic/vampiric relationship, and Adam and Rita/Camilla share a travesty of romance. Camilla enters Diane's room as a hyper-vital force, bearing the life siphoned from Betty. Camilla's make-up is exaggeratedly rich in color, her skin glowing while Diane's is almost grey. The Camilla metamorphosis of Rita is placidly sated, as if with her victim's blood. Energized by Diane's thwarted passion, Camilla incites her sexually and then rejects her; and, at a fateful party on Mulholland Drive, enjoys watching Diane squirm at Adam's announcement of what appears to be their engagement. But things are not as Rita/Camilla believes. The announcement aborts, as Adam, with a malign laugh, leaves off the word "married" from his initial "we are going to be" prefiguring the fact that they are not "going to be" anything. Being has been supplanted by nothingness through Adam's fatal capitulation; Betty will kill both Rita and herself. They are all already dead, in some way, anyhow.

A grim view of mass culture, and life in general? Well, rather a grim angle of perception. The narrative structure, dependent on the neutral, Lynchian darkness of the blue box, relativizes the events that have unfolded. Given Lynch's faith in darkness as the loam of both creativity and destruction, these aspects of the unseen that emerge from the box, are most fruitfully read as contingent on the integrity of the sensibility that enters the darkness. Had Adam not capitulated . . . But even though he has, destruction is never final in the Lynchian universe. Lynch has told me that there is always hope, even, according to him, Fred Madison's seeming doom at the end of *Lost Highway* would have been mitigated had there been more time to pursue his story in that film. Had *Mulholland Drive* been the continuing story on television for which Lynch had originally planned, ostensibly the detective audience would have moved fluidly between the emptiness and fullness of the dark unknown from which all manner of things are born (surely also Lynch's thwarted plan for *Twin Peaks*). Perhaps the Internet, Lynch's newest passion, with *its* capacity for continuing narrative will serve his turn as the Mr. Roques of network television have not.

As it is, at the closure of *Mulholland Drive,* Lynch seeds the darkness with hope when he haunts the screen with radiant, cloudlike images of Betty and Rita as they once were. Traces of better possibilities remain despite the narrative triumph of Hollywood's criminal solipsism. Similarly, Lynch returns to Club Silencio in the final frame, empty now save for a woman (Cori Glazer) seated in a box overlooking the stage (we have seen her before), whose blue hair, of the saturated color of

the mysterious box that holds the indeterminate darkness of the unknown, tops a face haughty and secretive, as she murmurs, "Silencio." Club Silencio now belongs to the audience, and which silence does it resonate? This is a closure sparkling with complex resonance. Full of the signs of both empty illusion and the fullness of possibility, this closure opens into the questionable future of popular culture, not for Betty, Rita, or Adam, but for us.

Martha P. Nochimson is the author of *The Passion of David Lynch: Wild at Heart in Hollywood*. (University of Texas Press, 1997). Her latest book is *Screen Couple Chemistry: The Power of 2*. (University of Texas Press, 2002).

Notes

I wish to thank David Lynch's production company, Asymmetrical, for making available to me a complete cast list.

1. As many readers know, *Mulholland Drive* was originally contracted as a miniseries for ABC-TV. On October 4, 2001, David Lynch discussed the relationship of his film to the original mini-series at a press conference at the New York Film Festival 2001. He revealed that the film was a product of two shooting schedules, a total of eight weeks shot in two four-week segments approximately one-and-a-half years apart, and that some of the story lines of the original series had to be dropped from the film. He did not disclose what had been excised. However, the script for the television pilot ends after the discovery of Diane Selwyn's corpse by Betty and Rita, which takes place about half way through the film's narrative. Thus Lynch developed a significant amount of new material for the film. However, the script for the pilot points to a comparable series emphasis on the subconscious, to which its last images refer. First, we go deeply into Rita's purse to find the mysterious blue key to the blue box. Finally, we end with a Bigfoot-like figure that is also in the film as part of a dream of a peripheral character about a monster behind a fast-food restaurant, identified in both the pilot script and in the film credits as a "bum." Whatever Lynch may have intended, the uncanny impact made by the figure distinguishes it from any ordinary understanding of the word "bum." In the largest sense of tone and meaning, the television series seems to have been headed in a direction similar to that of the film.

   At the press conference, Lynch spoke of inner knowing as the key to creativity, and of the need to "trick the mind" into opening beyond its closed system of thought. An allusion to the blue box? These are variations on themes he has frequently discussed with me during interviews, and his comments at Lincoln Center strike me as an oblique statement about the substance of *Mulholland Drive,* both in its initial and evolved stages.
2. In the September/October 2001 *Film Comment,* Phillip Lopate, an avowedly incurable rationalist, attempts to deal with the narrative instability in *Mulholland Drive* by wondering if the film is in part or whole a dream. Trying to anchor the film to some kind of ordinary logic, he goes as far as speculating that a scene in which Betty/Diane masturbates may explain it all: perhaps the film is a masturbatory fantasy. To his credit, Lopate lets the film carry him away even though he maintains a logical distrust of its power. However, his suspicion is so strong that Lopate is willing to think he may have been seduced by pornography. ("Welcome to L.A., Hollywood Outside David Lynch Plunges into Tinseltown's Dark Psyche: Philip Lopate on *Mulholland Drive,*" pp. 44-50). Others with a similar rationalist itch have wondered if Betty and Rita are dead at the beginning of the film. In a figurative sense, Betty and Rita can be viewed as already dead, as the processes in motion will lead inexorably to their demises. But to insist on it literally means that Rita died in the crash in the initial frames and, if the film is to make any sense, such cannot be the case. The crash is an unexpected interruption of a murder planned by the crime cartel. Given the role of that cartel in the film, then, the crash has to be a glitch in ordinary Hollywood power relations that permits Rita to escape briefly from them. It is clear that neither of the men in the car who threaten Rita is Joe (Mark Pellegrino), the man with whom Betty/Diane contracts to kill Rita/Camilla. If it is not Betty who is the cause of the eradication of her former friend/lover, there was no need for us to take a trip on *Mulholland Drive*.
3. Martha P. Nochimson, *The Passion of David Lynch: Wild at Heart in Hollywood* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1997), p. 185.

Film Quarterly
Annual Film Book Survey

PART TWO

British Cinema in the Fifties

Gender, Genre and the "New Look"

By Christine Geraghty. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. $75.00 cloth; $27.95 paper.

Coming between the immediate postwar golden age of Lean, Reed and Powell and Pressburger, and the 60s New Wave boom, the critical consensus is that the 50s represented a sad slump in the fortunes of British cinema. With the notable exception of Raymond Durgnat's *A Mirror for England*, there has never been much academic attention given to this period and it continues to be seen as a moribund era. Christine Geraghty's comprehensively researched and thoughtfully argued *British Cinema in the Fifties* is to be welcomed for shedding some light on an era of filmmaking often despised or ignored by critics, but at the same time fondly remembered by the public while gaining new fans through its afterlife on television. What's more, these films' influence in British film culture is still felt. After all, this is the last time that British films were unambiguous commercial successes—something that current filmmakers would understandably like to emulate. Although Geraghty claims that many of the films "now look as if they come from another world" (37), this just doesn't ring true in a month where the two major British releases are *The Parole Officer* and *Lucky Break*, two comedies which owe a great deal to genre filmmaking of the 50s. And let's not forget Hugh Grant in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, a sexier retread of the kind of role perfected by Ian Carmichael during the decade. The 50s are not so distant as we might sometimes like to believe.

Christine Geraghty's central argument is that the watchwords of historiography of post war Britain, "austerity" (shorthand for dullness) and "affluence" (shorthand for complacency), should be supplemented by the equally important term "modernity." The 50s, rather than being a time of stolid stability, was a time when people are trying to grasp "the newness of things" (21)—the seismic upheavals brought about by war, changing gender roles, technological advances, loss of empire, and a drastically revised position on the world stage. One of the key upheavals that the book deals with is the shifting significance of the cinema itself. Within this diminished industry British films were enjoying enormous commercial success to a degree never seen before or since. In her opening chapter, Geraghty presents a vivid picture of the cinemagoing experience as it mutated through the decade, making lively use of personal testimonies and letters to film magazines. This provides an essential background for what is to come in later chapters. British cinema, she argues, drew its success from its decisive flight from modernity, providing "a safe space in which the demands of modern citizenship can be resiliently shrugged off, an opportunity for relaxation in the old-fashioned spaces of the cinema" (195), the anti-modernist message of the films reinforced by the very place their patrons watched them.

Geraghty defines her approach as broadly feminist and three of the book's most impressive chapters deal with the representation of women in films of the period. The first, "The post-war settlement and women's choices," expands upon an argument begun in an earlier collection on British wartime cinema, *Nationalising Femininity*, against the glib notion that melodrama is always transgressive and realism

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is always in the pay of the powers that be. Instead of being seen as binary oppositions, realism and melodrama often work together productively, in such films as the Ealing women's pictures *It Always Rains on Sunday* and *Cage of Gold*. In them, she argues, "realism is not being 'transcended' but is an essential component of the way in which restraint and excess are working together to express emotions rooted in a material context that focuses tightly on what home and marriage actually have to offer" (91).

A problematic female figure is the "new woman," who, according to Geraghty, tended to be treated badly or totally ignored in the anti-modernist trend of British films of the time, although she discerns its traces in two stars, Kay Kendall and Virginia McKenna. The material gathered on their personae and film performances is some of the most enjoyable in the book, with Geraghty making an original and convincing argument for the careers of these two women as "a rare glimpse of the complex construction of femininity in the 1950s" (174).

The book also shows how Britain's international concerns were inflected in the cinema of the time. The chapter entitled "European relations" attempts to get to grips with why there was such an influx of European women into British films of the 50s. Geraghty traces the progress of the continental women in these films, from the sad survivor of the ravages of war to the sexpot, a cipher for free love before the 60s, and gives a nuanced account of how this female type reflected Britain's ambivalent feelings about what lies on the other side of the English channel. This is complimented by the chapter that follows, a discussion of two films of Empire, *Simba* (set in Kenya) and *Windom's Way* (in Malaysia), documenting another key site of anxiety during the decade. All that is needed is a chapter on fears about accelerating Americanisation and the triumvirate of British worries about "abroad" would be complete.

Another form of escape came in the films that returned to the triumphs of WWII, the war film being the most popular and prolific genre of 50s British cinema. It seems a bit of an odd imbalance that this is the only chapter that deals directly with the construction of masculinity (it is touched upon in the chapters on comedy), in comparison with the three chapters on femininity. British male stars dominated popularity polls, taking over from the female stars who had been so important in the previous decade and the stiff-upper-lipped war heroes portrayed by the likes of Kenneth More and Richard Todd constitute some of most enduring images of the 50s, and as such are worthy of further attention. This chapter provides a sound survey of the key war films packed with many revealing details. But it's a bit dry. For example, the material on *Ice Cold in Alex* is convincing enough but from its description here, you would never recognize it as the film James Chapman described as one of "psychological intensity and latent eroticism" (*Journal of Popular British Cinema*, 1, 1999).

This is my only misgiving about the book. It is refreshing in that it eschews the obvious "this has been undervalued" rhetorical tactic which is used to preface so many writings on British cinema. The author never makes inflated claims for any of the films as undiscovered masterpieces, admitting that Geoff Brown's statement "staring at British cinema in the 50s is like staring into a void" (37) is one for which she has some sympathy. But actually the book's lack of enthusiasm for its subject is rather dispiriting. At the end of its reading, one is left wondering why someone would lavish so much time and energy on films that they hold in such obvious contempt. Geraghty claims a "new look" at these films but ends her book repeating the same creed as earlier critics, Thank God for the New Wave, concluding with a quotation from *Billy Liar* and the final point, "The hierarchies, the class patterns and the gender separations that had marked the rearguard action of British cinema in the 1950s were by this point under inexorable attack" (195). Is this really fair or accurate? Doesn't the fact that she reaches this conclusion have something to do with the choice of films under discussion and the decision to concentrate on certain genres over others? There are understandable constraints in a book of this size about dealing in depth with many films, and Geraghty mounts a convincing defence of her decision to concentrate on the ones that she feels have been underexamined. But at the same time, putting horror, sci-fi, and thriller films back into the picture, alongside the comedies and war films, might help to give an idea of the diversity of Britain's 50s film culture, rather than paint it as a period of reactionary conformity. Films like *Seven Days to Noon* and *The Quatermass Xperiment* certainly do not shrink from exploring what modernity might mean, and were able to gain large audiences. The 50s is *Genevieve* and *Reach for the Sky*, but it is also *Night of the Demon* and *Yield to the Night* and this ought to be more fully acknowledged.

British Cinema in the Fifties is indubitably excellent within the perimeters it sets itself, weaving the films into a persuasive overall thesis, but it doesn't have much time for them as anything more than social documents. Perhaps it is indicative of the period's poverty of aesthetic achievement that there is very little to say about them *as films*, but I'm not completely convinced by this. Interestingly, when the book moves into close analysis (the detailed descriptions of specific sequences from *Dance Hall* and *Carve Her Name with Pride* for example) it really comes alive. This seems to me to be a far more fruitful avenue to explore and points the way forward to a really new look at this maligned decade. It is too simple to say that the massive appeal of such films is "in giving audiences a rest from the stress of being citizens in the grip of modernisation" (37). The reasons for their popularity are more complex and varied than Geraghty gives the films (or their audiences) credit. The missing ingredient that I think is needed is suggested by Peter Wollen in an article from the April 1998 *Sight and Sound*: "As I read through copious new accounts of British studios or genres or periods or representations of gender or national identity, I begin to wonder where aesthetics fits into the agenda of research and rediscovery." In Geraghty's book, we get a thorough examination of the historical currents feeding into a film like the buoyant Pinewood studios comedy *Bachelor of Hearts* but little sense of how it works as a film—precisely why the film is enjoyable or funny (which I think it is). While the plots of

such films might resist modernity, one might argue that *aesthetically* their jaunty-clean, bright Technicolor visuals are the objective correlative of what modernity meant to 50s audiences, who embraced it wholeheartedly.

Aesthetic considerations are important: a book about film should begin with the films and move out into the social context from them, not begin with the context and then pick the aspects of the selected films to fit. However, what really detracts from the achievement of *British Cinema in the Fifties* is that it does not evoke what I think is the vital spark of writing about film, which is making the reader want to see the films which are being discussed. While it adds a great deal to the existing knowledge of the period and offers many original insights, unlike Raymond Durgnat's book on the same period it does nothing to overturn the unfair notion of this time as cinematically stagnant.

Melanie Williams teaches film at Hull University in the United Kingdom.

The Cinema of Hong Kong

History, Arts, Identity

Edited by Poshek Fu and David Desser. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000. $70.00 cloth; $25.00 paper.

Since Hong Kong cinema became widely recognized in the West in the late 1980s, numerous books, anthologies, and articles have appeared in English on this "semi-national" cinema—a Chinese cinema peculiar to the former British colony and present day Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic. This volume assembles selected papers from a 1997 University of Illinois Conference (including three subsequently published works). While the title suggests a comprehensive vision, this volume does not replace magisterial overviews by Stephen *Teo (Hong Kong: The Extra Dimension*, BFI, 1997) and David Bordwell (*Planet Hong Kong*, Harvard University Press, 2000), instead, these essays explore discreet aspects of history, aesthetics and culture, incorporating interesting differences among authors. Some essays probe complex historical periods and issues of Hong Kong history to illuminate social and filmic development; others are dominated by the impact of the 1997 handover. An interesting tension in the collection emerges between close localized analyses and essays that situate Hong Kong film in terms of success abroad or global film issues. Ultimately, the book raises provocative questions for film and culture in Hong Kong beyond its individual articles.

The history section includes three articles on Hong Kong cinema from the turn of the century to the 1970s and Desser's article on the 1970s Kung Fu craze in the U.S. Four "arts" articles, shaped by auteurist textual analyses, focus on King Hu, John Woo, Michael Hui, and Ann Hui. The five final essays ask how nationalism, colonialism, urban form and culture, diaspora, the 1997 handover, and consumerism affect identity formation, again providing disparate answers. The editors also provide an overview introduction and chronology of Hong Kong cinema and H.C. Li contributes a useful bibliographic essay on relevant works in English

One of the most interesting articles is Law Kar's "The American Connection in Early Hong Kong Cinema," which shows the long, complex connections between the two societies. Early Hong Kong cinema pioneers were often Western-educated. They not only brought Hollywood films to Hong Kong and China, but also set up production houses in Hong Kong and the U.S. For example, producer Moon Kwan, who helped D. W. Griffith in *Broken Blossoms* (1919), created the Grandview studio in San Francisco with Joe Chiu, producing one of the first Cantonese talkies in 1933. They later established another studio in Hong Kong, making Grandview a bridge for two film communities. Hence, trans-Pacific exchanges took shape even before Hong Kong became prosperous and chic. While these films did not enter the U.S. mainstream, the essay underscores a long-term global flow of films and ideas.

Poshek Fu's overview of the 1960s and Stephen Teo's similar piece on the 70s also situate the reader within the local/global cultures of Hong Kong. Fu examines how youth films tackle problems concerning the generation gap in order to understand how Hong Kong society experienced modernity. Teo provides a straightforward account of the film culture of the 70s, with the rise of Kung Fu films, the prominence of Mandarin films, and the eventual blossoming of the Cantonese New Wave.

Desser's "The Kung Fu Craze: Hong Kong Cinema's First American Reception," reviews the history of martial arts production. The article speaks pointedly about US audiences as Desser uses American box-office data to explore Kung Fu films' short-lived but robust popularity—its diverse appeals and its impact on Hollywood—in the 1970s.

Turning from history to aesthetics, David Bordwell's textual analysis of 1960s/1970s master director King Hu's films shows how Hu shot and edited kung fu action sequences. Bordwell writes that instead of using long shots which provide a "totality of the action" (114), Hu used "one-by-one tracking shot(s)" (115), separating movements and letting audiences concentrate on the essential actions. Bordwell reads Hu carefully and lovingly as a unique artist.

Tony Williams' examination of John Woo points to the 1997 handover as a crisis for Hong Kong cinema. He asserts that many of Woo's heroes, embodying traditional Chinese values of loyalty and friendship, are threatened by contemporary consumer capitalism, and express nostalgia for a Hong Kong that many perceived would disappear with 1997. Jenny Lau's analysis of Michael Hui and Cantonese comedy, by contrast, introduces Western readers to this important pioneer of Cantonese cinema whose works are difficult to translate and thus have received little attention from the West. Lau also asserts that many scholars are too preoccupied with 1997. She notes how many of Hui's characters are similarly trapped between tradition and modernity, especially amidst the economic boom in the 70s.

Finally, Patricia Erens describes the work of Hong Kong's most prominent female New Wave director, Ann Hui. Again, Erens looks at "ongoing negotiations between tradi-

tional values of the East and the modern values of the West" as she explores three more specific elements—displacement, autobiography, and the role of China—in Hui's thought and career from television to major current productions.

The final section of the book deals more directly with questions of identity. Here, Fu reminds readers that Hong Kong was (and remains) marginal to both Mainland Chinese culture, dominated by Beijing and Shanghai and British culture. He examines immigrant/exile filmmakers in Hong Kong and films of the especially intricate period ranging from 1937-1941, when Hong Kong films were considered backward, vulgar and racy (215) and Mainlanders dealt with the local as Other. Fu also underscores ongoing struggles of Hong Kong to see itself as different—being Southern Chinese and Cantonese-speaking while enjoying a more "Western" lifestyle.

Leung Ping-Kwan, in his evocative article, illustrates how Hong Kong cinema represents urban identity from the 1950s to the 1990s. He contends that by the 1970s, while Western values were condemned in Hong Kong film's narratives, they often pervaded their mise-en-scéne, providing tensions of place and meaning—a theme that continues for New Wave directors and contemporary films. Natalie Chan Sui Hang, by contrast, begins her work from a more arbitrary distinction between historical films that use events in a "genuine way" and allegorical nostalgia films (255), which she posits as countermemory to official history. Her article is concerned with the complexities of fictional reconstruction in film and issues of readership as well as questions surrounding the ownership of history.

Sheldon Lu's article returns to global concerns, as he examines a "fluid, deterritorialized, transnational and mobile mechanism of national affiliations," (276) through films like *Comrades*, *Almost a Love Story*, and *Happy Together*. Lu asserts that while characters in these films are constant migrants, their affiliation with China expresses itself in popular, mass-mediated terms like songs and media coverage of Deng Xiao-ping's death. He forces us to consider what kind of state China has been and the multiple trajectories that constitute diaspora experiences. A different globalism imbues Gina Marchetti's "Buying American, Consuming Hong Kong, " which takes an interesting look at how American commodity culture has permeated many Hong Kong films, especially *Chungking Express*.

Overall, the collection provides stimulating questions and answers, especially when it highlights neglected aspects of Hong Kong cinema and society. Many essays posit primary clashes—East and West, tradition and modernity—to define Hong Kong and its films. While these questions certainly have faced Hong Kong society and filmmaking (see Matthew Turner and Irene Ngan's marvelous collection of essays, *Hong Kong 60s/90s:Designing Identity*, Hong Kong Arts Centre, 1994), they might equally characterize the films of Spain, India or the U.S. over the same time period. Moreover, it is important not to see these tensions as inevitable frameworks, constraining Hong Kong film production (or criticism). As some essays show, diverse influences and negotiations within an auteur's body of work or single movies represent creative dialogues about identity—and "Hong Kong cultures"—that are not simple derivatives of external forces. With 1997 five years behind us, in fact, these essays underscore the complexities of a continuing Hong Kong production of both films and culture.

Cindy Hing-Yuk Wong is Assistant Professor of Communications at the College of Staten Island, City University of New York.

Cinematic Political Thought

Narrating Race, Nation and Gender

By Michael J. Shapiro. New York: New York University Press, 1999. $79.00 cloth; $18.50 paper.

Emerging out of New York University Press's innovative book series "Taking on the Political," Shapiro's *Cinematic Political Thought* grounds itself in the theories of Immanuel Kant, Walter Benjamin, Michel Foucault, and Gilles Deleuze, and ultimately engages in an ethico-political exploration of contemporary film and history through the employment of "cinematic" writing. In other words, Shapiro's self-consciously "ahistorical" and "universalist" text, as it broadly and philosophically explores the interstices of race, nation/globalism and gender, mirrors the unique qualities of cinema. Coming to resemble an avant-garde documentary by its conclusion, Shapiro's work utilizes linguistic montage and détournement while opening itself up during its close readings of disparate films and other popular culture texts that range from an ephemeral moment during an interception at a Giants game to a particularly salient scene in the Australian film *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (1994). Continually invoking Kant, Shapiro demonstrates a radical openness and freedom in his analysis (and methods) while working towards a specific, humanistic goal: "to encourage hospitality towards ambiguous protean and unsettled modes of selfhood and community" (7). Shapiro's intellectual nudging, I feel, is related successfully and with such an openness that it inspires a response—questions, insertions, "back-talk."

In the first chapter, entitled "The Politics of Now-Time: Reading *Hoop Dreams* and Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon*," Shapiro begins by recounting an almost "unintelligible" occurrence in televised sports, the interception and touchdown of an exceptionally *slow* football player, Giants' Ray Agnew. Shapiro goes on to use this pop-cultural moment to launch his exploration of mobility and time as it pertains to media and then *mediated* subjectivities, those that watch and react. Particularly, Shapiro calls into question the idea of a subject becoming "larger than experience" (13) through the channels of global, mass communications and how this representation inevitably incites a shared sense of speed. Shapiro then ties this theory to the idea of the body, relating Steve James' *Hoop Dreams* (1994), a documentary which chronicles the lives of two black, high school age boys from Chicago's projects as they aspire to become NBA players, to Stanley Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon* (1975), a drama which charts one man's strivings for class mobility (the ultimate

of which is the aristocracy) in eighteenth-century England. In both films, the central characters' attempts to transcend their class are manifested in their bodies; Shapiro posits that speed is represented differently in each film, both diegetically and through the characters' corporeal and cultural selves. While Shapiro's linking of the two films is pertinent, his individual reading of *Hoop Dreams* is especially compelling and renders his discussion of *Barry Lyndon*, by comparison, somewhat light. He argues that *Hoop Dreams* exposes the multiple, physical, and social "time travels" that the two boys must navigate through: geographic, academic, racial, social, monetary, and physical. Indeed, Shapiro's discussion of the interlocking forces that impede and literally *slow down* the two subjects within their culture of hyperspeed is powerful. This leads to a larger discussion of race and sports which is briefly uttered at the end of the chapter: "the contemporary experience of sports is, among other things, reflected in moving black bodies—on playing fields, in the social order, and in the streets (clothed and shod in sports-logo apparel)" (33). Perhaps, Shapiro's argument could have been strengthened had he discussed more of those "other things" as opposed to *Barry Lyndon.*

With "Narrating the Nation, Unwelcoming the Stranger," the next chapter in Shapiro's study, the author aims to "direct an encounter between Kantian hospitality and an inhospitable security-mindedness" (39). Shapiro begins setting a history of American anti-immigrant sentiment into motion by focusing on the works of two white sociologists, E.A. Ross and Allen Brimelow, whose blatant racism is attributed to anxieties which manifest themselves in notions of "natural," racial (i.e. white) superiority. The author argues that the ubiquity of Ross and Brimelow's perceptions tend to build a national identity based in inequality; this belief in an "ideal," national identity then sets up systems of privilege/ oppression, as well as structures of class and immigration policies. Shapiro then turns to texts that "intervene" and speak to such a hegemonic construction of identity. John Sayles' film *Lone Star* (1996) is championed as one of these interventions in its look at U.S./Mexico relations in terms of immigration and views of history. Importantly, Shapiro believes that the film "denaturalizes national space" (66) by incorporating otherness and through its postmodern, pluralistic narrative structure. While Shapiro's review of *Lone Star* is highly unique and significant, the major points made in this chapter are reminiscent of earlier political/textual works. For example, when Shapiro states that "unified and fixed national cultures are inventions, fantasies designed to legitimate the idea of a 'nation-state'" (71), echoes of Edward Said's *Orientalism* immediately resound. I wonder what path Shapiro's thoughts would have traversed had he not ended the chapter on this point, but would have rather used Said (or Foucault), as opposed to Kant, as his starting point. But then again, this would facilitate a linear theoretical trajectory, and would therefore undermine Shapiro's "ahistorical" undertaking.

In his next chapter, "The Politics of 'Globalization'," Shapiro opens with a look at *Father of the Bride II* in terms of American ideals of family and home; and then, how immigrant subjects are represented as a threat to these ideals. Thus Shapiro believes that the film harbors anxieties associated with a "colorful" national space, and projects pointed uneasiness towards a Middle Eastern character, "Habib," who is portrayed as an economic, religious, and moral threat to the white, patriarchal, "American" home. After setting up this framework, Shapiro then embarks on what is perhaps his most experimental analysis in the book. In combining the American histories of Certified Public Accountants (CPAs), Christian "ecumenicalists," and security analysts as they relate to 'globalization,' Shapiro develops a thesis that explains how such "state discourses" work to demonize immigrant subjects through "Othering," constructing non-white/American characters as deviant, lawless, and terrorist."Dark" immigrants like Habib promote white anxiety, and hence, work to build a national sense of distrust and hatred towards Arabic peoples. At this point in his argument, Shapiro presents a counter-narrative, one which maintains an alternate family structure—Mira Nair's *The Perez Family*. Depicting "modernity's diasporic cultural dynamic" within its narrative, Nair's film rethinks nationalist codes of identity and space and pushes for a politics of location. Shapiro calls this a "cinema of displacement."

Cinematic Political Thought's final chapter explores white, male, American masculinity in relation to the construct of "value(s)" and authenticity. Departing from Kantian philosophy, Shapiro finally targets his argument in an attempt to mobilize cultural signs and to exact cultural change. To do this, Shapiro relays his most in depth film analysis—a close reading of the sexual, social, and economic codes in William Friedkin's *To Live and Die in L.A* (1985). Much of the film's tension centralizes around the sexually ambiguous "bad guy" who makes his living as a professional counterfeiter. This leads Shapiro onto a discussion of sexuality as a type of economic currency; where sexual Others, like counterfeit money, are depicted as false and illicit, not to mention devoid of value. While this discussion is compelling, Shapiro focuses entirely on the negative connotations of "counterfeit." I would have liked to have read a "counter reading of counterfeit"—ways that counterfeit can be used transgressively both literally and metaphorically, and moreover, as a means of weakening the hegemony and overall structure of "straight-white-male-capitalist-patriarchy" (bell hooks). Instead, Shapiro encourages the promotion of "counter-cinematic texts," like Stephan Elliott's *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, that use irony as a guiding device while exploring the overlapping cross-sections of sexual ambiguity, power, nation and the nature of oppression.

As a textual montage, *Cinematic Political Thought* contains layer upon layer of (counter) cultural insights and analyses. Certainly, Shapiro's highly theoretical book "takes on the political" and breaks generic ground in both the fields of film studies and political science.

Alison Hoffman is currently a graduate student in Critical Film and Television Studies at UCLA.

Class Struggle in Hollywood, 1930–1950

Moguls, Mobsters, Stars, Reds and Trade Unionists

By Gerald Horne. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001. $22.95.

Consider the following speech delivered to a combined meeting of three of the big industry guilds in 1946: "Every one of us here realizes that the one hope for progress and a liberal outlook in America and social gains and social welfare depends on organized labor. Right here in this room for the first time is the one thing that the employers have feared most in Hollywood . . . here is all of labor shoulder to shoulder and side by side exactly the way it should be."

The rhetoric is familiar enough, and with one year remaining between the meeting and the blacklist, it's no real surprise that a spirit of optimism prevails. The identity of the speaker, though, is something of a surprise. It's Ronald Reagan, SAG (Screen Actors Guild) officer, union man, democrat, liberal. Those, alas, were different times.

Proudly standing "shoulder to shoulder and side by side" with his fellow industry guild members as late as 1946, Reagan was anxious to take a leadership role, standing up for working men and women in Hollywood. But just over a year later, cannily appreciating the winds of change, Reagan would alter his tune. It is precisely those winds of change that concern Gerald Horne in *Class Struggle in Hollywood, 1930-1950: Moguls, Mobsters, Stars, Reds and Trade Unionists*, a comprehensive history of organized labor's emergence and eventual decline into irrelevance in Hollywood in the years leading up to and immediately following the Second World War.

The story Horne tells involves a fascinating cast of characters—players from a variety of celebrity subcultures all with a stake in a struggle for power, prestige, and cash. This struggle made for strange bedfellows. Horne asks us to consider a number of interesting relationships, for example: Columbia studio chief Harry Cohn and Mafiosi Johnny Roselli and Longy Zwillman, Richard Nixon and gangster Mickey Cohen, actor Gary Cooper and Nazi Albert Goering. In doing so, he highlights the competing interests and ideologies in play in the years leading up to the blacklist. At its best, the book plays out like a James Ellroy novel with proper footnotes.

Horne does well to explain the complex relationships and alliances that were at the time regarded with seriousness and consequence. Sorting out today, over fifty years after the fact, what certain players did or said provides something of a political scorecard of who at this crucial moment in Hollywood history either did or did not "do the right thing." For example, Rosalind Russell, Robert Montgomery, John Wayne, Humphrey Bogart, Susan Hayward, Charles Laughton, Mickey Rooney, Red Skelton, Clark Gable, and Basil Rathbone crossed picket lines in 1945. Do we—should we—now look at these actors and wonder at the price they were willing to pay, the friends and colleagues they were willing to cross, to be stars? John Garfield, Gene Kelly, Edward G. Robinson, Rex Ingram, Joan Crawford, Roy Rogers, Dale Evans, and D.W. Griffith honored the strikers and refused to cross picket lines. The names are important. That's why I repeat them here.

Notable and notorious Hollywood leftists like Dalton Trumbo and John Howard Lawson actively supported striking guild members to the bitter end. Like Reagan, they too gauged the winds of change and staked out a political position. Reagan, who sided with management, had as much of a career as his acting ability could get for him and of course later became president of the United States. Trumbo and Lawson went to jail and upon release found themselves blacklisted out of the industry. Trumbo and Lawson's eventual adversary in Washington, DC, HUAC attorney Robert Stripling, was (while Reagan was still standing up for the guilds and Trumbo and Lawson were still getting paid to write scripts) taking sides as well, affiliating himself with the pro-Nazi Bund. Horne reminds us, making history in the 40s in Hollywood and elsewhere in the U.S., was all about relationships and affiliations.

As promised in the book's subtitle, Horne is keenly interested in the "uncanny parallel between the decline of CSU [the Conference of Studio Unions] and the reassertion of mob influence in the entertainment industry." Horne argues that the Communist Party did not, as was so often alleged at the time, control the CSU. There were plenty of Reds in the film industry, many or even most of them Jews, but actual CP influence over the unions was over-estimated and overstated. Jewish control over the industry was similarly exaggerated, but it nonetheless provided a significant motive for federal inquiry into the movie business.

Horne details how the mob ran CSU's principal rival at the time, IATSE (the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees) and explores how studio executives engaged the mob to help them sort out and control the industry workforce. It was a deal made with the devil of course, the result of which was a whole lot of violence, mayhem, and red baiting, all to the individual worker's disadvantage.

Given the high drama of the times, it is ironic that the story at the heart of this book—the struggle between the CSU and IATSE which led to so much acrimony and bloodshed—was in and of itself not all that complex. It was from the start a jurisdictional dispute. Horne does his best to dramatize the CSU/IATSE conflict. But there's no way for him to change the story's anti-climactic and predictable arc. Historians find history. They don't get to make it.

One figure in particular emerges as the book's (flawed) hero: Herb Sorrell, the legendary union activist who ran the CSU. Sorrell was a complex man, a dedicated and fearless union activist, but in the end a lousy strategist whose bullheadedness may well have cost his comrades in the end. Sorrell steadfastly fought state and federal congressional committees, the mob, and studio executives in Hollywood—the moneyed players in New York, Las Vegas, and elsewhere who controlled the studios. He was a painter and a former

boxer—a tough guy in a blue collar with the sleeves rolled up past the elbow. His failure to prevail with the pro-worker CSU over the pro-management IATSE really wasn't all that surprising. The guys with the money and connections won because they always do.

In *Class Struggle in Hollywood, 1930-1950*, Horne makes creative use of a wealth of primary sources: a close examination of 77 collections at 36 different sites. His use of these sources won't be to everyone's taste; he draws conclusions from personal papers and memoirs that I bet got his publisher's attorney's attention. The conclusions he draws may also put off some historians who like their history served cold and objective. Horne hardly conceals his sympathies for organized labor and his disdain for the tactics used to suppress the guild movement in Hollywood. But as he and other historians of the era have made clear—Victor Navasky and Michael Demming come immediately to mind—it is difficult and maybe even disingenuous to pretend to be objective when writing about Hollywood during the Red Scare.

The risk of tipping his hand ideologically or of alienating more conservative historians seems to me well worth taking. Horne endeavors to name names and take sides to remind us of an era in which the naming of names and the taking of sides could get a person into a whole lot of trouble. And unlike HUAC, the MPAA, the FBI, and the studio brass in the late 40s, all of whom drew conclusions based on affiliations, memberships, even over-heard conversations, Horne can back up his findings with careful and extensive research.

Jon Lewis is Professor of English at Oregon State University. His most recent book is *Hollywood v. Hard Core: How the Struggle over Censorship Saved the Modern Film Industry.*

Creatures of Darkness

Raymond Chandler, Detective Fiction, and Film Noir

By Gene D. Phillips. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2000. $27.50.

Although Phillips insists that *Creatures of Darkness* is not a biography of Raymond Chandler, he has provided as much biographical information as one would want in a book devoted to two aspects of Chandler's film legacy: the screen adaptations of his fiction and the films for which he received screenplay credit. Except for *Playback*, which Chandler planned as a screenplay and then recast as a novel, all of his major fiction reached the big screen, often in several versions. *Farewell, My Lovely* was filmed three times, only once under its original title in 1975 with Robert Mitchum as Philip Marlowe, giving a performance as jowly as his appearance. The classic version is *Murder, My Sweet* (1944), preceded by the entertaining but forgettable *The Falcon Takes Over* (1942). *The Big Sleep* was filmed twice—in 1946, with Humphrey Bogart as Philip Marlowe, looking like a disillusioned knight trapped in the seedy Camelot; and in 1978, with Robert Mitchum again as the shamus, looking like an Arthurian reject who belonged in a seedy Camelot. It is difficult to assess Robert Montgomery's Marlowe in *Lady in the Lake* (1946), since the character is more of a presence than a person. Montgomery, who also directed, turned Chandler's novel into a study in subjective camera, so that the entire action is presented from Marlowe's point of view, with Marlowe visible only on a few occasions, notably when his reflection appears in a mirror and at the end. Gimmickry or creative camera? Phillips goes to neither extreme, although he makes a good case for Montgomery's direction, at the same time reminding us that two years before Hitchcock filmed *Rope* (1948) in eight roughly ten-minute takes, Montomgery was also experimenting with long takes that may have been less intricate but were nonetheless fluid.

If some of Phillips' plot analyses seem overly detailed, it is because the narratives themselves are so complex, and the logical connections often so tenuous, that exegesis is the only recourse. The first time I saw the 1946 *Big Sleep*, I became completely lost when the action abruptly shifted to a pier as a car was being hauled out of the water. Whose car, I wondered? After a few more viewings, I discovered it was Owen Taylor's. And who was he? Oh, yes: the Sternwood chauffeur. But who killed Taylor? That's postdoctoral work, at which Phillips excels. Of every account I have ever read about the identity of Taylor's killer, his is the most plausible, particularly since Chandler himself left the matter unresolved. Phillips has shown that the district attorney's speech in the William Faulkner-Leigh Brackett 1944 script provides the answer. However, since the speech never reached the screen, critics and viewers alike have regarded Taylor's "unsolved" murder as one more loose end in a film with so many. Yet according to Phillips, who places the original 1945 cut and the 1946 release version within the context of the Faulkner-Brackett script, *The Big Sleep* would have been less mystifying (but perhaps not as much fun) if the loose ends had been tied up instead of clipped off.

The second half of *Creatures of Darkness* focuses on Chandler the screenwriter. Chandler may have taken a dim view of screenwriting, yet he coauthored the script of what is arguably the greatest example of film noir in American cinema, *Double Indemnity* (1944). Although he shared screenplay credit with Billy Wilder, who claims to have "taught" the neophyte screenwriter how to create a movie script, it's his voice one hears in the dialogue, particularly in the verbal duel between Walter Neff (Fred MacMurray) and Phyllis Dietrichson (Barbara Stanwyck) as each tries to top the other's double entendre. Of course, Wilder also knew how to turn a phrase, so perhaps we are hearing a duet, rather than an aria. Still, Barbara Stanwyck, long after she retired from the screen, called *Double Indemnity* the finest script she had ever *read* (italics mine), which implies that Wilder's tutorials bore fruit.

The only other significant film with which Chandler's name is associated as screenwriter is Hitchcock's *Strangers on a Train* (1951), based on Patricia Highsmith's novel of the same name. Since Hitchcock thought visually (for example,

the preponderance of images of the double, including shoes and tennis rackets), much of what Chandler had written for the film was discarded—the result being shared credit with Czenzi Ormonde, the protégé of Ben Hecht, who also worked (uncredited) on the script. The *Strangers* experience proved that Chandler was never destined for a long screenwriting career. While admired for his fiction, he proved to be ill suited to a medium in which a collaborative effort often ends with one person's receiving possessory credit: the director. But anyone curious about Chandler's true potential as a screenwriter should read Phillips' section on *The Blue Dahlia*. According to director George Marshall, Chandler's original script was not only "beautifully written" but also "perfect" (197), though that perfection, alas, did not reach the screen.

Apart from being an impressively erudite book, *Creatures of Darkness* is also a balanced one. Phillips respects Chandler, demons and all; he also argues convincingly that Chandler envisioned Marlowe as a man who understood the nature of a fallen world without the theology that explains it. A knight need not know why the scales of justice must be balanced, why restitution must be made, or why order must be restored. He merely follows T.S. Eliot's mandate in *Ash Wednesday*: "Redeem the time."

Bernard F. Dick teaches at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Teaneck, New Jersey, and is the author of *Engulfed: The Death of Paramount Pictures and the Birth of Corporate Hollywood*.

Dreams Within a Dream

The Films of Peter Weir

By Michael Bliss. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000. $29.95.

Auteurist theory has gone through at least three stages since its inception, and it seems to me that someone writing an auteurist study, such as *Dreams Within a Dream*, now needs to weigh the claims of all three. As first proposed by the French critics writing in *Cahiers du Cinéma* in the 1950s, auteurism attempted to gain for film the respectability already held by written fiction and theatrical drama by equating film directors with authors in these other forms. As Robert L. Carringer has written in a recent *PMLA* (March 2001) article, the vision of the director put forward by Truffaut and Bazin was that of a "Romantic artist battling to maintain personal vision in an encroaching world." The second phase was an attempt to rescue auteurism from the excesses of its "Romanticism." It was the phase of Auteur Structuralism often associated in the late 1960s with British critics such as Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, Robin Wood, and Peter Wollen. This group tried to replace the idea of a biological author with the notion of the author-in-the-text, that is, a body of themes, conflicting dichotomies, and visual mannerisms. The joy for the viewer was to watch these elements develop over the course of a career, and an important benefit was the chance for a viewer to use one film to glean the meaning of another. The final stage, Collaborative Auteurism, came from the debates about the authorship of *Citizen Kane*, conducted by Americans Pauline Kael, Peter Bogdanovich, and Robert L. Carringer beginning in the 1970s, concerning Orson Welles' indebtedness to his screenwriter, his cinematographer, and his film editor. The debates have ended with the acknowledgment, obvious to any professional filmmaker from the start, that the director is an "author" only in a carefully defined "collaborative" sense, perhaps as a "leader" of a "team."

In terms of the three phases, Bliss is very much concerned with the first and second, but only sporadically with the third. Bliss describes auteur Peter Weir often, and not always to his credit, as an Australian maverick who will not compromise his artistic aims to traditional Hollywood dictates that might ensure commercial success—in short, as an embattled Romantic artist fighting for the integrity of his vision. As far as setting clear a body of themes, conflicts, and stylistic elements running through Weir's works, the emphasis of Auteur Structuralism, Bliss does a very convincing job. For him, "All of Weir's films are stories about an individual attempting to achieve some sort of reconciliation between conscious activity and unconscious yearning." Bliss defines the hero's search as "the yearning for an integrated life, for the return to a prelapsarian existence in which one's self and one's world exist in harmony." In his carefully documented introduction, Bliss describes a variety of elements in Weir's films that shaped his work throughout his career and contributed mightily to his overall achievements. These elements include a strong conflict of good and evil (derived from melodrama), a sense of the importance of "mateship" (the celebration of men's communal activities), a reduction of women's roles (frequently to tangential figures with certain exceptions noted), the use of characters of color as the dark Other, and most importantly a fascination with landscape, sometimes threatening, sometimes healing, but always an alternative to the urban, "rational" lifestyle Weir distrusts. Key texts for Weir were Freud's "The Uncanny" and Jung's body of work on dreams. Important stylistic elements include slow motion, gauze shots, and expressionistic soundtracks.

Bliss's arguments seem valid, but his neat laying-out of the issues in the introduction can leads to repetition when we encounter these elements again and again in his readings of the individual films. Perhaps he "gives away" too much in the introduction. Still, the virtue of Auteur Structuralism, where a cluster of films on the same theme can function to interpret each other, has never been better illustrated. For example, the uses of harsh, inscrutable, "primal" landscapes in *The Last Wave* and *The Mosquito Coast* as lessons against over-reliance on the rational can tell us much about where to look and what to look for in the more intriguing, mysterious, and understated *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, a movie where landscape and sexuality are equated.

On the issue of Collaborative Auteurism, Bliss is shaky at best. I am most comfortable with him in his chapter on

Picnic at Hanging Rock, where he discusses Weir's conversation with Joan Lindsay, the author of the novel from which the movie is derived, about the historicity of the events. Here, Bliss at least shows that Weir is building on and adapting someone else's story. I am most alarmed, however, when Bliss deals with *Dead Poet's Society*, which he calls "an American version of *Picnic at Hanging Rock*." He describes the character of Mr. Keating as "the type of teacher Weir doubtless would like to have had when he went to school" and adds a biographical argument: "In Keating, . . . Weir has not only fictionalized his father but projected himself into the character as well." The movie seems Peter Weir's in its entirety. Yet, we know *Dead Poet's Society* is made from a screenplay written by Tom Schulman, based loosely on his experiences in an English class at Montgomery Bell Academy in Nashville and even more loosely on Schulman's teacher Samuel F. Pickering, Jr. Further, Robin Williams, the actor playing Mr. Keating, has brought some of his own material to the movie. Those of us of a certain age can remember fondly Williams doing his version of Marlon Brando mumbling Shakespeare in a Brooklyn accent on TV well before the movie, and we must assume Williams brought his *shtick* to the Shakespeare sequence of *Dead Poet's Society*. In a thematic sense, Bliss is, of course, right. Schulman has written a Weirian screenplay, and Williams has played a Weirian role. And most of us can accept the use of Weir's name as a shorthand for the "team" Weir-Schulman-Williams. But the notion of collaboration needs to be acknowledged. Not to do so is simply false to the filmmaking experience.

The excellence of *Dreams Within a Dream* lies in Bliss's reading of the individual films. He is insightful and thorough in his analyses, and he is intelligently compassionate in his discussions of Weir's heroes as they stuggle for that moment "in which one's self and one's world exist in harmony." A case in point is Bliss's chapter on *Fearless* (1993). This movie has never received the recognition it deserves, and perhaps Bliss's chapter will encourage a rediscovery. *Fearless* is a disaster film in which the emphasis is not on the catastrophe itself, as is the standard Hollywood emphasis, but on the psychological/religious effects of the event on one who lives through it. Bliss notes that if there are inexplicable disasters, there are also moments of marvelous human rescue and blinding grace. Peter Weir delights in showing us this paradox, not just in *Fearless*, but in many of his films. And Michael Bliss delights in discovering and discussing each one of them. In *Dreams Within a Dream*, director and critic are well matched.

John C. Stubbs is a professor of English at Virginia Tech, where he teaches courses on narrative. He is the author of two books on Federico Fellini.

English Hitchcock

By Charles Barr. London: Cameron & Hollis, 1999. $24.95.

Hitchcock criticism, one of the largest mills in the industry, betrays many blind spots, prejudicial emphases, and wellsprings of misinformation, especially when it comes to assessing how and when Hitchcock became Hitchcock and where we should gravitate to when we study his career of more than 50 years and more than 50 films. Barr's foundational argument is that the elevation of Hitchcock's American films, championed by his most influential enthusiasts, such as the *Cahiers du Cinéma* critics, Peter Bogdanovich, and early Robin Wood, has been at the expense of his English films, which are often unjustifiably denigrated, neglected, or otherwise insufficiently appreciated. These latter qualities characterize not only approaches to early Hitchcock but approaches to British film history in general, an unfortunate predisposition that Barr and a new generation of scholars, including Pam Cook, Andrew Higson, Jeffrey Richards, and Sarah Street among many others, are energetically and successfully contesting in an ongoing series of books and articles. In the present book Barr returns much-needed attention to each of Hitchcock's 23 English films, and not only brilliantly interprets and reevaluates them through a skillful combination of close reading, thematic and structural analysis, and contextual elucidation, but also convincingly demonstrates the many ways that Hitchcock's "English roots" are "a source of nourishment," rather than "a handicap that he had to struggle to overcome" (6).

Throughout *English Hitchcock* Barr effectively blends cultural, institutional, and auteurist approaches to filmmaking, each one necessary but not sufficient, each one restraining and enriching the others. His overall theme is "the gradual process of his *becoming* (or anyway starting to become) the Hitchcock we all think we know" (11), and he traces this process against a foreground of formative influences and enabling circumstances, structures, and collaborators. For example, he spends a great deal of time on literary influences on Hitchcock, particularly "the contemporary English stage and novel" (14), and makes many fine observations about the residual thematic and ideational impact of these preexisting texts on Hitchcock's films that take off from and otherwise transform them—an approach adopted more recently by Peter Conrad in *The Hitchcock Murders*, where he rightly and successfully follows Barr's advice to take these texts seriously, rather than Hitchcock's own often dismissive comments about them. But Barr is primarily concerned with the cinematic influence of literary texts: Hitchcock himself (like Eisenstein talking about Dickens and Milton and pre-cinematic examples of such things as montage and close-ups) repeatedly noted that writers like John Buchan, Marie Belloc Lowndes, John Galsworthy, and J.B. Priestley not only gave him subjects but also adaptable film techniques. Barr persuasively credits these and other writers with stimulating Hitchcock's notions of the thriller (especially the "beneficial shocker"), cinematic embodiment of suspense, rigorous preproduction work and use of story-

boards, experiments with point of view, attraction to certain kinds of chase sequences, and perhaps even his use of the MacGuffin.

The pivotal influence of writers on Hitchcock comes about not only through their novels and plays, but also through his day-to-day work with them in preparing scenarios. Perhaps following Hitchcock's own lead, critics have tended to downplay or simply bypass the contributions of his screenwriters, but Barr continually emphasizes the importance of these collaborations without overstating the case. (This is a precarious balance to maintain: for example, Steven DeRosa's recent study *Writing with Hitchcock* is a fine reexamination of a writer-director relationship, but occasionally one is left with the impression that Hitchcock was the extremely skillful director of four John Michael Hayes films.) Hitchcock's English films fall rather neatly into several clusters defined by his writers: five literary adaptations, where the primary "collaborator," although not physically on the scene, was the author of the novel or play being adapted, flanked by eight collaborations with Eliot Stannard, six with Charles Bennett, and two with Sidney Gilliat, the penultimate of which, *The Lady Vanishes*, "serves as a brilliant summation of the strategies and pleasures developed within" the previous films (17). Barr concentrates on Stannard and Bennett, and in the very least establishes their importance as inventive and effective "constructionists," helping to give form to Hitchcock's often centrifugal imaginative impulses and "moments." But he also identifies their distinctive ideas and recurrent themes surfacing in the films they made with Hitchcock: Stannard's interest in British stories/locations, plots detailing parent-child relations, and Bennett's cosmopolitan wit and skill in building "successive climaxes" out of repressed inner energies and external pressures.

Hitchcock's significant collaborations do not begin and end with his writers: Barr also calls attention to other commonly neglected dimensions of the creative environment within which Hitchcock worked. For example, after meticulously checking all the credits, Barr identifies a surprising number of actors and actresses who repeatedly weave in and out of these films, in both primary and secondary roles, alerting us to the contours of what might be called a Hitchcock "ensemble" and the echoing and counterpointed effects created in using some players repeatedly. He also stresses the importance of a variety of professional partnerships that had an immediate and lasting impact on Hitchcock: for example, with fellow director Graham Cutts, producer Michael Balcon, and his more-than-wife, Alma. Barr does not have time to elaborate on these relationships in detail, but he sets them out as key items of the research agenda for ongoing work on Hitchcock. The last topic in particular, Hitchcock's creative collaboration with Alma, which Barr sees as mediating Hitchcock's working relationship with his predominantly male scriptwriters, leaps out as the subject of an important book yet to be written.

Barr's fresh look at these films yields much new factual material about their production, corrects assorted common errors (such as the "legend" of Hitchcock's cameos: he actually appears in only six of these twenty-three films), and calls attention to important "textual" questions about the films that we need to keep in mind as we reexamine them. He is occasionally a bit apologetic about the latter, fearing that his indefatigable scrutiny of details may strike some readers as "petty, hair-splitting stuff, academic point-scoring carried over from the obscurer corners of Classical and Eng. lit textual studies into film" (214). On the contrary, his rigorous application of some of these more "traditional," but far from outmoded critical methods, brings light to some of the obscurer corners of film studies. For example, his interest in what might be called "textual variants" produces not inscrutably coded notations relegated to an apparatus, but fascinating critical comments on such things as the multiple versions of *The Pleasure Garden*, the original opening of *The Lodger*, which according to several reports is quite a bit different from what stands in existing prints, and the ending of *Secret Agent* shown in previews but then modified, featuring experimental visual effects like flashes of color and images of the film breaking. And one of the highlights of the book is his comparative analysis of the silent and sound versions of *Blackmail*, a *tour de force* blend of archaeology and aesthetics that reveals the many layers of this film's text and construction.

Barr's detailed interpretive and structural analysis goes hand in hand with a revised critical ranking of Hitchcock's English films. Previously underrated or even maligned films take on new significance. *The Farmer's Wife* strikes him as a remarkable technical achievement, not only because of its Soviet-influenced "creative editing" but also its fluid camera movement, and these techniques provide cinematic embodiments and explorations of a theme that later becomes central in Hitchcock's films, "a man-woman struggle for control and for knowledge" (59). *The Manxman*, Hitchcock's last all-silent film, rightly gets Barr's highest praise as "a consummate illustration of the rich expressive potential of the medium to which he was saying farewell" (67), and he judges it as the equal of such films as *Letter to an Unknown Woman* and *Random Harvest*, implicitly reminding us that Hitchcock was in some ways throughout his career as much a maker of melodramas as of thrillers. And Barr is particularly brave and ingenious in facing the challenge of two of Hitchcock's most disliked films, *Number Seventeen* and *Waltzes from Vienna*, arguing that the former is "not only an exhilarating film but an important turning point" (122), the "template for the Hitchcock thriller (124), and that the latter initiates a key Hitchcockian element, the use of "diegetic music not just in isolated scenes but as a structuring device across the whole narrative" (128).

Interestingly, this enhanced appreciation of neglected and disparaged films is paired with a reassessment and toning down of the praise usually given to his "classic" films of this period. Barr considers the thrillers of the 1930s as "a narrowing down and in some ways even an impoverishment" (132) of the diversity and inventive energy of the earlier films. For example, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, widely acclaimed as Hitchcock's great "comeback" film and step

into cinematic maturity, merits only a rather perfunctory summary analysis here, and *Secret Agent* is treated basically as "an intensive formal exercise which finally doesn't add up to much more than an exercise" (168). Perhaps like the director himself, Barr is wary of what the reputation "master of suspense" has done to our appreciation of Hitchcock's skills that go far beyond this pigeonholing. He grants that the films from *The Man Who Knew Too Much* through *The Lady Vanishes* "constitute a remarkable series" (132), in part by embodying key elements of the thriller genre, especially the engagement with "the public world of politics and social change" (99), but also by transforming and transcending the genre, emphasizing family dynamics and romance elements. Barr's dual argument is that we should not let the thrillers blot out the importance and the continuing influence and resonance of the non-thrillers in Hitchcock's career, nor should we overlook the ways in which his thrillers of the 1930s prefigure not only such films as *North by Northwest* but also *The Birds*.

Although the book is structured as an argument "for" the English films, Barr constantly emphasizes the continuity of early and late Hitchcock and focuses on themes, images, and techniques that run through Hitchcock's entire career: images of "tranced" women, and a particular concern for portraying women under societally and domestically induced pressures; oneiric qualities, especially dream-states rendered with a precision and clarity that makes them even more frightening than stylized special effects nightmares; intricate formal patterns of "echo and symmetry" (185); the "complex play of optical viewpoints," displayed not as flashy technical tricks but as signifiers of a similarly complex "play of emotional and moral" viewpoints (71); and an overall "sensitivity to the social and cultural currents of the time and place in which he was operating" (81).

The end result of arguing so strenuously for the importance of these early films is that Barr puts Hitchcock back together again. His claim is not that English Hitchcock is superior to American Hitchcock, but that the early period was one of substantial experimentation and achievement, stress and release, both a seed-time and a flowering. Hitchcock himself might have agreed with this critical estimation. Throughout his interviews he commented frequently—and often enigmatically—on his English and American periods (comments that perhaps Barr might have surveyed more fully, despite his acknowledgment that Hitchcock's interviews are not always to be trusted), and was equally likely to dismiss the early period (picturing himself as only an amateur) as the later (picturing himself as a still unsatisfied professional). For example, when Chabrol asked him "Which of your American films do you like best?" he replied "None of them." Perhaps Hitchcock's most balanced comment on the subject came when he was asked by Truffaut about the differences between working in England and America: "A coal mine is always a coal mine." Barr adds a well-deserved positive flourish to that sober assessment, and his invaluable picture of Hitchcock at work in the English mine shows how he, with tremendous energy, strain, and help on many sides, pressed that coal into diamonds.

Sidney Gottlieb is Professor of English at Sacred Heart University, in Fairfield, Connecticut. His collection of interviews with Hitchcock is forthcoming from the University of Misssissippi Press.

Essential Brakhage

Selected Writings on Filmmaking by Stan Brakhage

Edited by Bruce R. McPherson. New York, N.Y.: Documentext, 2001. $18.00.

Long established as a key proponent of the personal, subjective, defiantly experimental film, the theoretical writings of Stan Brakhage remain less widely disseminated. This state of flux, however, seems set to change. *Film at Wit's End*, which documents Brakhage's personal perspective on eight exemplary film artists (among them the likes of Bruce Conner, Maya Deren, and Marie Menken), has been reprinted in its entirety. *Essential Brakhage*, meanwhile, a useful first port of call in rethinking Brakhage's body of writing, collects extracts from Brakhage's *Metaphors on Vision* with selected chapters of *Brakhage Scrapbook*. Augmenting this reprise are three more recently written pieces, which act as a coda to Brakhage's distinctive aesthetic and philosophical exploration.

The volume's opening section, "Metaphors on Vision," first appeared in *Film Culture*, back in 1963, as a special edition designed by Fluxus artist George Maciunas. This broader cultural context—New York amidst the rise of a new American cinema—is illuminating for a number of reasons. Established by Jonas Mekas, a fellow proselytizer of a distinctly personal approach to cinema, *Film Culture* sought to define the parameters of an emerging, visionary, cinematic art. According to this philosophy, Brakhage sets out in these pieces the conceptual rationale that has informed much of his filmmaking to date. We see an examination, first of all, of the properties of light, an insistence that the specificity of cinema lies in its ability to transcend the properties of our own vision. Abstraction, hallucination, and studied, internal vision are all explored as Brakhage maps out a realm of expanded perception that reaches its quintessence in the myriad abstract hues that illuminate our own closed eyelids. It is this perceptual play that functions both as inspiration and metaphor for much of the director's cinema.

Brakhage's writing, like that of Soviet theorist and filmmaker Dziga Vertov before him, comes across as a tribute to the transformative potential of the camera, its particular magic located in the ability to refract and reinvent the world around us, as well as the ways in which we have been trained to perceive it."We begin to realize," notes Gene Youngblood in *Expanded Cinema*, a treatise on experimental cinema's capacity to heighten inner knowledge, "that Brakhage is attempting to express the totality of consciousness, the reality continuum of the living present" (88). Where Vertov saw expanded perception as a form of *ostranenie*, an estrangement replete with political significance, Brakhage locates this abstraction as the secret code for achieving a humanist art.

"There is no need for the mind's eye to be deadened after infancy," he explains, "yet in these times the development of visual understanding is almost universally forsaken" (13). For Brakhage, the closed eye becomes a movie theater unto itself, in which the optical nerve functions as a physiological projector and the eyelids become velvet curtains, rising and falling at a presentation's beginning and end.

Elsewhere, the fragments of prose, script outlines and ephemera extracted from *Brakhage Scrapbook: Selected Writings 1964-1980*, continue to explore perception. These selections read best when thought of in direct relation to Brakhage's own films. The rationale behind their predominant silence, for instance, is revealed to be part of a wider framework of thinking concerning the relationship between seeing and hearing in cinematic art. For Brakhage, we discover, conventional uses of sound and music are perceived as peripheral to the image—as redundant to cinema as a sound track might be to painting, or a set of images to a musical composition. In this respect, Brakhage's writing points towards the specificity of cinema, eliciting a distinct faith in the potential artistic function of the moving image.

At the same time, these musings also help situate Brakhage's work within a plethora of influences, situated almost exclusively outside of film—from abstract expressionist painting to the compositional models of Messiaen ("I seek to hear color just as Messiaen seeks to see sounds" [81]), and the literature of Gertrude Stein and the poetry of Ezra Pound. Yet in establishing these connections, Brakhage's writing is often dense, ambiguous, risking collapse under the weight of its determined obtuseness. As Brakhage himself notes, "I deck my prose with whatever puns come my way, aiming at deliberate ambiguity, hoping therefore to create a disbelief in the rigidity of any linguistic statement . . ." (29). The effect of this foggy style is disarming. Meaning remains unfixed, floating amidst a wave of reference that takes in literature, mythology, fine art, and the outer reaches of spirituality and philosophical thinking.

In this sense, Brakhage's writing suggests that cinema's essence might lie closer to poetry, music, and painting than it does to institutional cinema. "A Moving Picture Giving and Taking Book," most directly, in defense of amateurism as a valid aesthetic project, acts as a call to arms and practical reference guide for personal filmmaking. Here Brakhage's writing offers affirmation that artistic insight might be achieved with an economy of means, a trajectory whose integrity is sought in complete isolation from institutional filmmaking. After all, the methods of direct cinema that Brakhage illustrates include the type of cameraless techniques—painting and scratching directly onto film, manipulating leader and reclaimed celluloid—that the director himself employs in films such as *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (1981) and *Mothlight* (1963), an abstract piece constructed by assembling moth wings, leaves and other dried foliage directly onto strips of film.

"Someone may someday realize that the living artist has the eyes of the age he lives in," wrote Brakhage in 1955, in "Make Place for the Artist." "They may understand that he makes his magic for the moment" (74). The question now, of course, almost fifty years later, is whether Brakhage's words, in many senses so typical of a halcyon period of American experimental filmmaking, remain relevant today. Certainly, for all Brakhage's elusive prose, his writing still engages on a number of levels. It offers a tribute, for instance, to artistic integrity, the projection of a singular aesthetic vision; a self-portrait of the artist, an autobiography of the creative process; a paean to light and expanded, abstracted vision; a commitment to cinema as poetry, a form as close to literature or painting as it is to institutional cinema; and a defense of amateurism, as a way of capturing and projecting a cinematic memory of one's living and seeing.

In presenting the work of a filmmaker who seems in many respects cast adrift from contemporary artistic practice, there is real pathos in the volume's closing, most recently written, sections. "Inspirations," from 1996, recounts the director's personal history of influence and inspiration, as if visiting old friends before embarking on a journey. "Manifesto," meanwhile, written earlier, pays further tribute to the properties of light—as transcendence, the photochemical magic of cinematic art—and points to the potential mystery and aesthetic beauty of personal filmmaking. Brakhage's writing comes full circle here to the pieces written almost half a century earlier. While Brakhage continues to make films from his home in Colorado, he does so with less regularity than in previous decades. On the evidence of the texts presented in *Essential Brakhage*, the director's aesthetic and spiritual vision remains undimmed. It is this celebration, the cementing of an unwavering trajectory, that provides the legacy of Brakhage's work. It offers the possibility that light, the bridge between inner and exterior life, might continue to exist as a defining feature of cinematic art.

Andrew Utterson is a research fellow in the Department of Media, Canterbury Christ Church University College in the United Kindgom.

Film Adaptation

Edited by James Naremore. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2000. $20.00.

James Naremore's collection groups twelve essays on film adaptation into sections on Theory and Practice, in an attempt to bring to life a "moribund field." If the field is indeed moribund, one wonders what imaginative new theory or demonstrated practice could resuscitate it. The volume suggests that what is needed is to move our preoccupation from form to content, to cultural studies, to make what Dudley Andrew calls "a sociological turn." But was it really structuralism and narratology that fostered these doldrums? Be that as it may, one looks in vain for sparkling new remedies. There are interesting flashes in the first two essays, André Bazin's "Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest" and Dudley Andrew's "Adaptation," but they are only glimpses, not searchlights illuminating new paths.

Bazin's essay, "Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest," is only recently translated, and, of course, anything by Bazin

will be of major interest to film scholars. He argues the esthetic legitimacy of film-adaptations—good films can achieve an "equivalence in the meaning of the forms." Then he makes what is essentially a political defense of adaptation, a kind of Popular Front view that it is better to provide the masses with adaptations of whatever sort than to leave them untouched as classics which they surely will not read on their own. He particularly likes the "digest" film, the "condensed adaptation," like Jacques Copeau's *Les Frères Karamazov* of 1911. And he advocates "an aesthetic sociology of the masses in which the cinema runs a relay race with drama and the novel and does not eliminate them." In that sense one could see a "single work reflected through three art forms, an artistic pyramid with three sides, all equal in the eyes of the critic." Personally, I find this insight valid, as it explains how, for example, Henry James's *Washington Square* and the stage and screen versions of *The Heiress* have somehow fused in my esthetic memory.

Dudley Andrew's essay (originally published in 1980 and reprinted in his *Concepts of Film Theory*) distinguishes three different sort of adaptations—"borrowing," "intersecting," and "transforming." (Geoffrey Wagner in *The Novel and the Cinema* [1975] proposed a similar tripartite division.) Borrowing "employs . . . the material, idea, or form of an earlier, generally successful, text." This kind of adaptation relies on the prestige of the original, not merely exploiting its fame, but calling up "new or especially powerful aspects" of the original. Its success rests not on "fidelity" but on "fertility." Its opposite, "intersecting," preserves the "uniqueness of the original text . . . to such an extent that it is intentionally left unassimilated in adaptation." Bresson's film version of Bernanos's *Diary of a Country Priest*, as Bazin noted, is a work of that order. By focusing so much on the visual and vocal image of the priest's book, the director "went out of his way to avoid 'opening up' or in any other way cinematizing the original." Far from erasing the novel, the film insists on the "otherness" of the original, setting up a tension which Andrew finds characteristically modernist (would he now call it postmodernist?). The third and "most tiresome" kind of adaptation—the one presumably that inspires scholars to think of the field as moribund—is that in which the film tries to transform the original. This leads them to inane preoccupations with "fidelity," pouring over whether the film captures the letter or to the spirit of the original. Imitating the letter is mechanical and uninteresting; truly catching the spirit is probably impossible.

Weary of all that, Andrew asks, with Bazin, whether it isn't time for a sociological turn. "What conditions," he asks, "exist in film style and film culture to warrant or demand the use of literary prototypes?" An interesting question, and my visceral response, each time I read the essay, is to ask, "What would be an example?" Some major catastrophe, like the Vietnam war that inspired Coppola to find in *Heart of Darkness* a form for *Apocalypse Now*? But that, I suspect, is not Andrew's point. The historical questions that he seems to pose are film-specific. "The cinema's sense of its role and aspirations," not history in general, induces its need to "construct matching stories." (Would an example be the change from the "first-person" camera representation of Marlowe's consciousness planned by Welles to Coppola's colossal pyrotechnics, reducing Willard in the Do Lung bridge sequence to a tiny helpless bystander at events almost beyond comprehension?) Andrew's examples concern such a phenomenon as the Wellesian mise-en-scène (interior shooting, long takes, etc.) that responds "to a new conception of dramatic space." Here I begin to get lost. What does that have to do with the choice of this or that novel as source? How is it related to his discussion that follows—of the cinema *d'auteur*, of the New Wave, of its relation to the cinema of quality, of how Zola's realism inspired Renoir, of how naturalist fiction led to film noir, of Renoir's relation to Gorky, and so on? Andrew's "complex interchange between eras, styles, nations, and subjects" tantalizes but speeds by too fast, and one can only hope that some day he will offer a book-length explication of his theory illustrated by extensive examples and analyses.

Robert B. Ray's "The Field of 'Literature and Film'" takes a most negative view of the enterprise and seems almost ready to deliver the moribund creature to its grave. The culprit here is, not surprisingly, the American academy. Citing Culler's trenchant critique of the "award system" in American colleges, which sees its goal as the 20-page analysis of a text, Ray argues that the need to get and sustain a job in a humanities department in the last decades has led to an "endless series" of such film/lit articles. "Restricted in scope, demanding neither sustained research into nor historical study about the two media, the typical adaptation study had things in common with that undergraduate staple, the comparison-contrast paper—it was easy to turn out, it satisfied the requirements, and it could be done over and over again." This argument would be more persuasive if it hadn't been made so often already. When Ray turns to suggesting intellectually respectable alternatives, the discussion becomes pretty skimpy. Though an admirer of Andrew, Ray argues that it is not enough to make our study of "artistic history, practice, and discourse "more rigorous. Such investigation has been done more effectively by Hollywood itself, since it can use tools far more supple than scholars' poor words, the tools of "images and sounds combined with language." (Is it really true that we don't have these tools at hand? How about still frames, not to speak of Photoshop, the internet, and broadening of the doctrine of fair use?) The alternative Ray proposes is to follow leads suggested by studies about the "transactions between word and image." Among those whose work he finds relevant are Freud, Eisenstein, Pound, Barthes, Godard, Eikhenbaum, Yates, Derrida, and Astruc. I'm all for new directions, but I wonder what practical use for film studies we can make of these writers.

From its very title, you can guess which authority Robert Stam's "Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation" privileges (and you wonder why Bakhtin didn't make Ray's list). Stam thinks that fidelity does have a meaning, at least to the extent that "unfaithful" expresses our disappointment that a film version does not give us the degree of pleasure we ex-

perienced in reading the novel. But he agrees that fidelity does not lead to interesting methodological inquiry, on the poststructuralist view that a text (in any medium) is never unique or originary, that it always comes into existence through a context of prior texts, and that none is super- or subordinate (at least in theory) to another. Instead of fidelity, the issue we should address is the kind of "specificity" that a film derives from the medium. We should recognize that an adaptation is a kind of "translation," "a principled effort of semiotic transposition, with the inevitable losses and gains typical of any translation," but also it is a "reading, dialogization, cannibalization, transmutation, transfiguration, and signifying." For the discussion of dialogization, that is, intertextuality, he uses the sophisticated taxonomy laid out by Gerard Genette in *Palimpsestes* (1982), which distinguishes among "intertextuality," "paratextuality," "metatextuality," "architextuality," and "hypertextuality." He explains these terms, and unlike the other essays in the "Theory" section, he gratifyingly provides a selection of examples to illustrate his arguments. Citations are both brief and extended (e.g., the various versions of *Madame Bovary*), and include both well- and lesser-known examples, from Kubrick's *Lolita* to Sergio Giral's *The Other Francisco*.

The essays on Adaptation in Practice are an even more mixed lot. Some concern the history of adaptation in Hollywood. Richard Maltby's " 'To Prevent the Prevalent Type of Book': Censorship and Adaptation in Hollywood, 1924-1934" is a short but efficient account of the effort at self-censorship by the Hays committee to solve the problem of how to adapt current novels and plays written for a more sophisticated and morally tolerant audience than that of moviegoers of the era (and those who monitored them). Maltby shows how tightwire an act this was. Hays and especially Thalberg tried to argue that the industry only reflected, and did not make, American mores. But they were defeated by the general hypocrisy of institutions like Congress and the Catholic Church. The essay includes a fine selection of quotations from the cultural elite on the one hand and the guardians of American "innocence" on the other.

Guerric DeBona, in "Dickens, the Depression, and MGM's *David Copperfield*," shows how and why Dickens' immense popularity in America "served as the basis for a certain kind of charitable, largely Republican ideology that worked as a salve for hard times without proposing any radical changes to the system," how, in short, Dickens "saved" Hollywood from the likes of Dreiser and the "cultural elite," providing a partial solution to the problem dissected by Maltby.

Gilberto Perez's "Landscape and Fiction: *A Day in the Country"* (reprinted from his *The Material Ghost: Films and Their Medium*, 1998) is the longest and best developed of the application essays. It discusses the similarities and differences between Auguste Renoir's and his son's approaches to the countryside. Jean was concerned with how the petit bourgeoisie responded not to the realities of nature but rather to the illusion which they projected onto it. The film is not pastoral, "but a film about the pastoral." The only member of the Parisian family who seems to imbibe the true beauties of the scene is the daughter, Henriette. Her ride in the swing (over which I labored in 1979) "carries an unmistakable sexual energy and a feeling of delighted awakening, of liberation." But even this is illusory and ultimately repressed, boxed in first by the lecherous gaze of the *canotier* Rodolphe, and then, fatally, by her marriage to her father's oafish apprentice, Anatole. Her tragedy, however, is offset by comedy—the buffoonery of the Laurel and Hardy father and apprentice and the farcical seduction of the mother by Rodolphe. This precludes access to a stable moral posture, and gives the landscape "a life of its own." Technically, the effect is supported by Renoir's famous dissociation of the river bank shots from any character's point-of-view. Like Antonioni (especially in *Red Desert* and *The Passenger*) Renoir grandly refuses to make nature subservient to plot and character or even theme, as it virtually always is in Hollywood films.

Michael Anderegg, in "Welles/Shakespeare/Film: An Overview," traces Hollywood's interest in Shakespeare from the early days, when the industry used the bard to legitimize itself with a dose of "quality" (one response to the dilemma described by Maltby), through the middle years of MGM spectaculars, to Welles' financially challenged but artistically brilliant cinematic renditions of the supreme drama that he knew so well. Anderegg proposes three categories of Wellesian adaptation: the "theatrical" *Macbeth* ("closed, claustrophobic, highly set-oriented"), the "filmic" *Othello* (in the sense that a vagabond production history prompted an "opening up" akin to that practiced by the European art cinema), and the "realistic" *Chimes at Midnight* (because the production history was a composite of those of the two other films). Of the Macbeth, Anderegg observes that it was the only one in which Welles sought to bring Shakespeare to the screen masses (as Bazin would have liked). He finishes his essay comparing Welles' efforts with those of Olivier, Zeffirelli, Branagh, and Kurosawa.

Matthew Bernstein's "*High and Low*: Art Cinema and Pulp Fiction in Yokohama" is an interesting account of how Kurosawa modified an American *roman noir*—Ed McBain's *King's Ransom* (1959)—to suit the tastes and needs of Japanese culture, but also as an expression of his own aesthetic. Instead of a police force that features the individual, "The Yokohama detectives are representatives of society, but as a group they are also dogged heroes. . ." Similarly, the "central capitalist individual," Gondo (played by Mifune), is not the hero and plays no real role in the capture of the criminal. Further, *High and Low* contains serious social commentary about class differences, which enter the novel only marginally, if at all.

"Fidelity" tangles with parody in Nelson Pereira Dos Santos's *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman* (1971), according to Darlene J. Sadlier, "The Politics of Adaptation." The film is based on several sources, in particular a sixteenth century account by Hans Staden, *Brazil: the True History of the Wild, Naked, and Maneating People*. "Framed by a burlesque newsreel," Pereira Dos Santos puts an ironic,

anticolonial spin on Staden's account. The cannibalism is performed in a dignified, ritualistic way, while the attack of the Frenchman on an old compatriot trader over some gold is an internecine act of capitalist greed. Sadlier draws parallels with current Brazilian attitudes toward the Indians, suggesting that things haven't changed much over the centuries, even if the anthropofagy has become metaphoric, entailing an "ingestion" of foreign ideas and for a consumerism that, however much it takes from foreign sources, manages to resist being transformed by it.

It's hard to understand what sort of taxonomy Jonathan Rosenbaum has in mind in "Two Forms of Adaptation: *Housekeeping* and *Naked Lunch*." I can't find much connection between the two discussions. The *Housekeeping* section seems little more than a review of the film, with special attention paid to the performance of Christine Lahti. The *Naked Lunch* section is mostly an autobiographical account of the author's experiences with Burroughs' novel and how they affected his reaction to Cronenberg's adaptation.

Lesley Stern, "*Emma* in Los Angeles: Remaking the Book and the City" struggles with definitions of "remake" and "adaptation" in an unedifying way."Remake" is a term usually applied to films based on previous films, not novels. It makes sense to say that *Scarlet Street* is a remake of *La Chienne*, but not that *Clueless* is a remake of Jane Austen's *Emma.* How Los Angeles is "remade" by this film twists the term beyond recognition. The movie is about Beverly Hills, a mere enclave having little in common with the rest of the city. More than anything, Stern's inflation of this minor comedy into some cosmic postmodern event precisely exemplifies the kind of academic practice deplored by Ray. What is postmodern about rolling gags through the well-greased mill of the teen genre? Here's a sample of the article's puffery:

> "*Clueless* not only remakes and comments on *Emma*, but remakes the teen movies that preceded it and also the twentieth-century apparatus of modernity that provides the preconditions of the genre—not just Hollywood, but, most spectacularly, the proliferation of popular consumer culture, manifested particularly in the music and television industries. Another way of saying this is that the film is alert to and permeated by the myriad influences that shape the very experience and notion of contemporaneity."

However alert and permeable it may be, the film is not very good, and it hardly constitutes an interesting adaptation of Jane Austen's great novel. And how come Douglas McGrath's 1996 adaptation goes unmentioned, even by way of contrast?

Seymour Chatman is Professor Emeritus of Rhetoric and Film Studies at UC Berkeley and author of *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* and *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film.*

John Ford Made Westerns

Filming the Legend in the Sound Era

Edited by Gaylyn Studlar and Matthew Bernstein.
Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001. $24.95.

"My name is John Ford; I make Westerns." Thus John Ford introduced himself before the Film Directors' Guild in October 1950, during his famous confrontation with the reactionary C.B. DeMille over the Hollywood blacklist of left-leaning film directors. It's a somewhat surprising statement: Ford eventually won the Academy Award for Best Director an astounding six times (an achievement never equaled), but none of his Westerns ever won him an Oscar. Yet, the Westerns were clearly dear to his heart, and starting with *Stagecoach* (1939), they have a claim not only to a central place in any study of Ford, but also in the study of American culture in the crucial period 1939-1965. This group of marvelous films is headed by *The Searchers* (1956)—the movie in which Ford began to undermine the Western as a genre (a genre he had done so much to create), by emphatic depiction of white violence and neurotic racist hatred against Native Americans. *The Searchers* is currently ranked in the *Sight and Sound* poll of film critics as the fifth greatest film ever made.

There are, of course, many studies of Ford's work as a whole (over 130 films), and many biographies. Yet perhaps because Westerns have always suffered from a certain cultural snobbery, this volume, edited by Gaylyn Studlar and Matthew Bernstein, is the first collection of scholarly essays devoted solely to Ford's Western films. In addition to nine scholarly essays, *John Ford Made Westerns* contains intriguing testimony from people who knew Ford well (including an excellent account of Ford by his favorite screenwriter Frank Nugent), an essay by Ford on John Wayne from 1951, a substantial and sophisticated discussion of Westerns as a film genre by Ford from 1964 (previously very difficult of access, and worth the price of admission in itself), and a collection of comments from other famous directors on Ford and his achievements. Here it is Alfred Hitchcock who provides the deepest insight. What makes Ford's films so special, he says, is the *sheer visual gratification* they provide the viewer (291), and Hitchcock's loving reference to Monument Valley shows he is thinking specifically of the Ford Westerns. Hitchcock thus stresses that the sheer pleasure of *looking*—the landscapes, the people, the action—is one of the great pleasures of Westerns (a pleasure which Hitchcock, of course, deeply understood: the voyeurism of *Rear Window*). Hitchcock here conforms to Ford's own maxim that film above all is a *visual* medium: one reason Ford loved his Westerns is that they provided the vast landscapes, the vigorous action, the sheer spectacle he loved to put on the screen. According to Ford, to construct a narrative consisting of "a series of simple, active, beautiful pictures" with "as little talk as possible" is to use the motion-picture medium to the fullest advantage (279).

But the other source of Ford's satisfaction with his Westerns lay in the emotional intensity he was able to achieve in

them. The purpose of his beautiful visuals, and his constant and careful use of music, was to evoke deep emotion in the viewer—excitement, fear, love, didactic examples of honor, courage, fanaticism. In a word, these films are humanistic and sentimental. In Ford's own essay he denies that his films are simple morality tale, but he asserts that they "have a basically moral quality, and I applaud this, and think that's the way it should be" (280). As Studlar and Bernstein say, this means that Ford's Westerns are ill suited to our cynical post-modern era (10). I find it both sad and culturally disturbing that my own undergraduates tend to see the moralistic tendencies of these serious films as mere kitsch.

All the essays in this collection are worth reading, but two crucially important ones are by Gaylyn Studlar on gender relations in Ford Westerns, and Charles Ramirez Berg on ethnicity.

Since the rise of feminism, Ford has been widely viewed as a fierce conservative on issues of women, femininity, and masculinity. Studlar objects to this depiction, and convincingly argues two major points. First, the women of Ford's Westerns, although they usually play minor roles—exceptions are Claudette Colbert and Edna May Oliver in *Drums Along the Mohawk* (1939) and Maureen O'Hara in *Rio Grande* (1950)—are invariably depicted as admirable personalities: strong, energetic, often successful, and rightly successful in enforcing their opinions. Second, and more important, the males in these Westerns, whom Ford depicts as his true heroes, tend to possess certain values that are generally denoted by society as primarily feminine. These values include: 1) forgiveness and non-judgmental love (John Wayne in *Stagecoach* in regard to his prostitute girlfriend; Ben Johnson in *Rio Grande* in regard to his sexually aberrant sister, and in *Wagon Master* in regard to his prostitute girlfriend; John Wayne in *Rio Grande* in regard to his wife and son; John Wayne in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence* in regard to his girlfriend who chooses another man); 2) a strong sense of nurturing (John Wayne in *She Wore A Yellow Ribbon*, carefully educating the young—and even raising flowers, as does Sheriff Ward Bond in *Three Godfathers*); and 3) a desire to foster deep community, and a deep emotional attachment to that community (John Wayne in *She Wore A Yellow Ribbon*; Ben Johnson, Harry Carey, Jr., and Ward Bond in *Wagon Master*). Studlar writes that Ford's consistent depiction of men with these "feminine" values as the true society-protecting and society-saving heroes in his previous films makes much clearer the sources of his repudiation of Ethan Edwards' social isolation and alienation, Ethan's hyper-masculinity, racism and hatred in *The Searchers*, Ford's most honored film. Ethan Edwards in *The Searchers* was John Wayne's greatest role, but Studlar's essay makes clear how different this role was from any Western role that Wayne had ever played for Ford, or ever would again.

Here one may note that in his social isolation and alienation, in his destructive hyper-masculinity, racism, and rigidity, Henry Fonda's Colonel Thursday in Ford's *Fort Apache* (1948) looks forward to the frightening Ethan whom Ford created eight years later. But as Charles Ramirez Berg points out, Thursday is more than a depiction of a damaged male personality or a failed leader. He is also representative of a specific American ethnic group—the cold New England Protestant elite whom Ford had known in his youth and whom he habitually made villains in his movies, and not just Westerns: see *The Last Hurrah* (1957) or *Donovan's Reef* (1963). Berg suggests that Ford, as a proud Irish-American whose parents were immigrants, had a strong tendency to sympathize with the ethnically marginalized, rather than with the groups that have customarily claimed center place in American history.

Most prominent here, of course, are Ford's heroic immigrant Irish cavalrymen in the three great post-war films on the cavalry. Like their Protestant officers, they are dutiful and brave, but they are also everything that their heartless New England Protestant colonel is not: wise, natural, practical, warm, humorous, loud, tolerant, egalitarian. They are not only *new* Americans; they are *ideal* Americans. Their moral ascendancy is so complete in *Fort Apache* (1948) that even the wives of the officers—all of them Protestant aristocrats—defer to Mrs. O'Rourke, the wise, brave, and warm wife of the regimental sergeant-major. (One must say that the sweet scenes where this is shown are as much a historical fantasy on Ford's part as the unified Irish village Ford depicted in *The Quiet Man* in 1952.) But Berg points out that Ford did not limit his ethnic inclusiveness to the Irish. Ford's West is populated not with mere generic "whites" vs. Indians, and not just with Anglo-Americans and Irish, but also with Scandinavians (historically an important group in the settling of the West, but ignored in Westerns), with immigrant Germans (in *She Wore A Yellow Ribbon* and *Cheyenne Autumn*), with Poles (the immigrant Sergeant Wichowsky in *Cheyenne Autumn*), and above all with Hispanics (Sergeant Buford in *Fort Apache*; the heroic Pedro Roca Fuerte in *Three Godfathers*; the Comanchero merchant Emilio Fernandez in *The Searchers;* the heroic captive Elena de la Madriaga in *Two Rode Together*). And Ford was the absolute pioneer in the depiction of the historic role of African-American soldiers in the West: *Sergeant Rutledge* (1960), made with great financial difficulty, has all the themes of *Glory* (1989) 30 years ahead of its time. Berg rightly underlines the sophistication and complexity of Ford's vision. The great exception, of course, is Ford's treatment of the Native Americans; but already in the 1940s he was giving them their say, if only briefly; and late in his career he depicted them as heroic resisters of oppression in *Cheyenne Autumn*.

Berg's point is that Ford on ethnicity is not merely "politically correct"; more importantly, he is *historically* correct—and it took an "ethnic filmmaker" to get it correct. With Ford, however, I think it crucial to also stress that his overt recognition of the ethnic pluralism of America (which seems to look forward to the election of the Irish Catholic John Kennedy as President in 1960) is combined with his own strong belief in the moral rightness of overall American unity. One sees this idea presented with Ford's typical sentimentality and power in scenes such as the ending of *Drums Along the Mohawk* (1939), where all the diverse ethnic groups of the early American population (including African-

Americans) are gathered together under an American flag; or when we see the regimental blacksmith, who speaks with a heavy German accent, proudly saluting the flag as the cavalry squadron rides by in *She Wore A Yellow Ribbon*. Studlar and Bernstein's fine collection of essays marks a new beginning in the study of Ford's Westerns as a separate group; it is matched only by J. A. Place's excellent book a quarter-century ago. But more will undoubtedly be written about these films—"sure as the turning of the earth," as Ethan Edwards would say. They are too culturally important, and too beautiful, to ignore.

Arthur M. Eckstein is Professor of History at the University of Maryland at College Park, and co-editor of *The Searchers: Essays and Reflections on John Ford's Classic Western* (forthcoming, Wayne State University Press).

Kon Ichikawa

Edited by James Quandt. Ontario: Cinematheque Ontario, 2001. $49.95.

One of the authors in this compilation, Audie Bock, depicts the Japanese filmmaker precisely within the cultural context of 1970s Japan: "[Ichikawa] himself said, 'I don't have any unifying theme—I just make any picture I like or any that the company tells me to do.' Ichikawa suffered accusations of immorality, absence of world view, and other notions, usually including that expressed by director Nagisa Oshima: '*He's just an illustrator*'"(38, emphasis is mine). This harsh image has been much the dominant one for Ichikawa as a filmmaker. Many of his films in the last three decades have been so-called commercial films, and many of them have not been critically adored: adaptations from popular detective novels (*The Inugami Family* in 1976, *The Devil's Bouncing Ball Song* in 1977, *Queen Bee* in 1978, and more recently *The 8-Tomb Village* in 1996, etc.); a 1985 remake of his own hit from the 1950s *Harp of Burma* (1956); and large scale films for different sorts of anniversary events (*The Makioka Sisters* in 1983 and *Actress* in 1986). As a result, even in Japan, there was almost no critical focus on Ichikawa until the 1994 publication by Yuki Mori (who is also one of the contributors in this compilation), which mainly presents interviews with Ichikawa. In the West, Ichikawa's *oeuvre* remains largely undiscovered.

Ichikawa, unlike Mizoguchi, Ozu, and Kurosawa, for instance, has not been crowned an auteur. Many of the essays here reassess his value as a filmmaker and it is one of the most intriguing points of the book. James Quandt, writes in his introduction: "Among the postwar Japanese masters, Ichikawa has long been an unlikely candidate for analysis; critical curatorial interest increasingly focuses on the 'expressive margins' of Japanese cinema, and, even if not always anti-canonical, has ignored or denigrated Ichikawa as an opportunist, dandy, or mere stylist" (1-2). Indeed, Ichikawa's career as a filmmaker was a "unique" one compared with those auteur filmmakers, who had already established themselves by the peak of the Japanese film industry in the 1950s and the early 1960s, and this book does an adequate job of laying out the different facets of his long history as a filmmaker.

Ichikawa started his career in the 1930s at the animation department of J.O., a rental film studio in Kyoto, and when J.O. became a full-fledged production company, he shifted to being an assistant director for feature films. (Although his career as an animation artist lasted only a couple of years (1933-1935), this start has often been highlighted in critical assessments of his work, as we can see in Oshima's defamation above.) Ichikawa's first film was produced in 1948, *A Flower Blooms* (though he directed another film *A Girl at Dojo Temple* in 1945, he claims the former as his first film in an interview), and like Kurosawa, he has often been characterized as a *sengo kantoku* (postwar filmmaker) with the stereotypical concerns of pacifism and humanism. Both Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto and Mark Shilling compare the two directors in the symposium and the interview respectively in this book. Ichikawa emerges here as singularly versatile, working across various genres and adaptable to all the major studios. Another often mentioned aspect of his work is his penchant for literary adaptation, which, unlike Kurosawa, runs toward contemporary Japanese novels and modern locales. Ichikawa literally made many of his best films with his wife, Natto Wada, who had worked as a screenplay writer for him from 1949 to 1965, and her influence led to his most artistically successful literary adaptations. All films currently available in the U.S. on video, beside the documentary *Tokyo Olympiad* (1965), are indeed based on an original novel: *Fires on the Plain* (1959) by Shohei Ooka; *Odd Obsession* (1959) and *The Makioka Sisters* by Junichiro Tanizaki, etc. At last, Ichikawa's relations with different studios are characterized by Yoshimoto: "Ichikawa is a very strange figure among Japanese directors. Unlike other masters, he doesn't seem to be closely associated with any particular film studios"(325). Yet, one might argue that such comparisons with the great auteurs is misleading, since in another sense, Ichikawa's versatility prefigures the work of later generations of directors, working under the increased constraints of downsized studios within a shrinking industry. He is a filmmaker who has constantly directed commercial films; in other words, he has shown a willingness to accept compromises with these studios, but after all, that has allowed him to keep on making films throughout the decline of the Japanese film industry since the 1960s.

The contributions for this compilation fall into four categories: 1) reprints of previous analyses in English on Ichikawa's films; 2) newly translated essays from Japanese (Ichikawa's own writings are included); 3) interviews and symposiums; and 4) recently coined essays. Because of the book's characteristics of crossing periods (the earliest essay was written in 1962) and crossing languages (English, Japanese, and French), readers will become more familiar with both the range of Ichikawa's work and how the study of Japanese cinema itself has developed over the years. One clearly notices intertextuality and a referential "dialogue" among earlier critical works: the former quote in Audie Bock's writing "I don't have any unifying theme . . ." (in 1978) is from Donald Richie's pioneering essay in 1966.

Max Tessier also evidently creates a dialogue with Richie on the matter of making a distinction between Ichikawa's "funny" and "serious" films in his 1967 French article. Tessier seemingly cites Ichikawa's nickname the "Japanese Frank Capra" from Tom Milne's 1966 article, but both of them vaguely mention it without indicating any Japanese language references—"Ichikawa's early reputation as the Japanese Frank Capra"(Milne) and "just as Japanese critics had nicknamed Ichikawa the 'Japanese Frank Capra' " (Tessier). As these examples indicate, we don't find any references from Japanese texts in these early essays; in other words, it seems as if the study of Japanese cinema just started from Richie's earliest writing. Which begs the question, were there really no Japanese contributions to the study back then? The complete neglect of citing Japanese sources in the work of such forerunning film scholars reflects the overriding asymmetry at the basis of relations between the West, especially the U.S., and Japan in the 1960s.

Readers can also find the methodological transformation in Japanese cinema studies throughout this compilation. Many of the more recent articles for this publication, contextualize Ichikawa's films in a specific cultural aspect of a certain period. Michael Raine analyzes *Punishment Room* (1956) in the context of the *taiyozoku* (sun tribe) film movement in the mid 1950s. Eric Cazdyn discusses the position of Ichikawa's films in a history of literary adaptation in Japanese cinema. Catherine Russell examines *Being Two Isn't Easy* (1962) in the context of the modern Japanese nuclear family along with a comparison with Ozu's films. The contextualization is most thorough in Aaron Gerow's essay "The Industrial Ichikawa: Kon Ichikawa after 1976." Some of the reprinted articles also share a tendency of situating Ichikawa's work within popular culture, such as Linda C. Ehrlich's essay, which places *An Actor's Revenge* (1960) within the aesthetic tradition of *sosaku hanga* (creative print), and Scott Nygren's analysis, which connects the same film into a current of Japanese melodrama.

Some of the translated essays from Japanese give us significant insights for reconsidering Ichikawa's films. His own writing "CinemaScope and Me" (originally included in his co-written book with Natto Wada, *Seijocho 271 banchi* published in 1962) especially counters the prejudice (one, which I had hitherto shared) against Ichikawa as "an opportunist, dandy, or mere stylist." Since he produced many high quality CinemaScope films, most critics have tended to see him as a style-oriented filmmaker, the darling of the CinemaScope period. Instead, his writing honestly tells us how challenging was his encounter with the new filmic apparatus: "The mighty nabobs who run the studio passed down the word after one of their production meetings. 'It has been decided,' they intoned, 'that your next film will be shot in CinemaScope.' My first response was one of utter confusion. How could I possibly learn to master that monstrously elongated screen in a way that would benefit my fimmaking? The more I thought about it, the more I realized that the standard-sized screen had become so familiar over time that it was almost a part of me" (303). The episode bears comparison with Ozu's disdainful rejection of CinemaScope as "toilet paper." This contrast of the "auteur" Ozu and the "survivor" Ichikawa, actually brings us a better picture of Japanese cinema's industrial history through Ichikawa's struggles and compromises with the studios. Gerow focusses on this idea: "that the Ichikawa who conforms so well to the film companies can tell us a lot about the contemporary industry, and, vice versa, that the structure of the movie business in Japan can give us clues as to the source of Ichikawa's recent success" (385).

This compilation was published as a part of the Kon Ichikawa Retrospective, an undertaking of Cinematheque Ontario in cooperation with the Japan Foundation and others. They provided new 35mm prints of some of Ichikawa's films and have organized a North American tour for the retrospective. Living in Boston, I received the blessings of the tour, and was able to see almost all films. (Both the MFA catalogue and Quandt's book introduction indicate the retrospective has 26 Ichikawa films, but only 24 came to Boston. I personally wonder what were the remaining two films.) Ichikawa is indeed a prolific filmmaker—he has directed about 80 films, and he remains active—his latest film *Ka-chan* will be released soon to movie theaters in Japan. In the retrospective, Quandt and Cinematheque Ontario emphasized Ichikawa's films from the specific period between 1953 and 1965; in a way, that era is still the peak of the Japanese film industry. As a result, we missed a chance to see almost 20 earlier films directed before the mid 1950s and many of his later films in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. While it is up to you to consider the retrospective's 26 films as "a glass half empty or half full," the study of Ichikawa has been neither completed nor sufficient; we would do well to incorporate many of his remaining films within a study in the near future. I was simply puzzled, for instance, why no essays in the book had thoroughly engaged with some of Ichikawa's most brilliant work, his "black comedies" *Pusan* (1953), *A Billionaire* (1954), and *A Full-up Train* (1957)—all of these films were selected for the retrospective. Yet the predominance of essays on *The Makioka Sisters*, for instance, or *An Actor's Revenge*, speaks of the continued lack of subtitled versions of Ichikawa's other works on video or DVD. While it did not detract from my enjoyment of this insightful compilation, I could not avoid the nagging issue; the book could have only limited use as a text for my Japanese film courses, since there is no access to these newly introduced films on campus. As Joseph A. Murphy pointed out when reviewing a different book on Japanese films: "What one would really like to see is this book released with a boxed set of twelve DVD's [for] a reasonable special institutional rate of $399 or less. That, I believe, would make a serious impact in the way Japanese film is understood in the West,"[1] one can only hope that more of Ichikawa's films will become available on DVD in the U.S.

Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano is Assistant Professor of Japanese Cinema and Culture at Tufts University.

Note

1. Joseph A. Murphy, "From Book to Screen: Modern Japanese Literature on Film," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 60, no.1 (2001): 218-220.

Returning the Gaze

A Genealogy of Black Film Criticism, 1909–1949

By Anna Everett. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001. $54.95 cloth; $18.95 paper.

It is all too easy to be cynical about the film reviews and commentary that appear in popular magazines and newspapers. Armed with a consciousness of the ways that the major studios manipulated press coverage in the past, we are rightfully suspicious of the cozy relationship between Hollywood and its reviewers, the tendency for these "surrogate consumers" to abandon their reportorial independence and become publicity shills for the film industry. The scandal this past summer involving Sony Pictures—in which its publicity department was revealed to have invented rave blurbs from an imaginary critic in order to tout its new releases—is only the latest episode in the inflation and abuse of the reviewer's work.

In her timely and important new book, Anna Everett reminds us that American journalists have covered and reviewed film in far less professionally advantageous circumstances than these, and for far different political ends. *Returning the Gaze* examines the history of film commentary and criticism in the African-American press in the first half of the twentieth century. Critics for the black press worked without benefit of recognition by the American film industry—oftentimes, indeed, without the basic professional courtesies of access to film screenings or advance publicity extended routinely to reporters from the mainstream white press. But from this position of exclusion, as Everett shows, critics for the black press "talked back" to mainstream white culture. Operating in diverse cultural registers—from community-based newspapers to elite "little magazines" to academic journals—critics for the African-American press developed a wide-ranging and intellectually complex film literature designed to explore the aesthetic, political, and economic impact of cinema upon African-American viewers.

This focus on issues of reception is one of the main contributions of Everett's study, and one of the things that makes her book especially valuable. The classic works on blacks and film in the pre-Civil Rights era—*The Negro in Films* (Peter Noble, 1949), *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks* (Donald Bogle, 1973), or *Slow Fade to Black* (Thomas Cripps, 1977)—deal primarily with what happens onscreen: demeaning plot situations and stereotypical characterizations involving African-Americans. More recently, scholars have investigated the active roles that some blacks played in the process of film production. The recent outpouring of work on the career of Oscar Micheaux provides a case in point. *Returning the Gaze* belongs instead to a very short list of studies that theorize black viewing publics as distinct interpretive communities for film. Most similar studies, drawing on conceptions of negotiated and resistant reading coming out of cultural studies and the work of Stuart Hall, examine the responses of present-day viewers and compile ethnographic data about their viewing habits and strategies of interpretation. While Everett is clearly influenced by this theoretical focus on what she calls the "use value" of film for viewers, her historical interest in the first half of the 20th century necessarily commits her to a different method of inquiry. Rather than interview viewers about their memories of filmgoing in this period, Everett culls the archives of some major black newspapers and magazines for film reviews and commentary in order to characterize the changing role that the African-American press played in both guiding the responses of black viewers and reacting to them. Her aim in the book, as she puts it, is one of "historical rediscovery" (4). By recovering the voices of these critics, Everett not only establishes the "aesthetic and historical foundations" for present-day scholarship on blacks and film, but further gives a sense of the critical and historical frameworks that shaped the black viewing public's experience of cinema as a social institution.

The book is organized chronologically. Each of its five main chapters assesses the critical discourse on film produced in a specific decade, beginning with the early cinema era, moving through the release of *The Birth of a Nation* (1919), continuing through the 20s, the 30s, and culminating in the post-World War II era of "tolerance pictures." In each of these chapters, Everett shows how coverage of film in the black press both draws upon and dovetails with contemporaneous public debates about race relations. In her chapter on the 1920s, for example, Everett reads the black press's attempts to "generat[e] mass enthusiasm for race movies" produced by and for African-Americans in light of the broader black intellectual project of promoting a "New Negro" sensibility which understood culture—both popular and elite—as a primary vehicle for black self-expression and self-invention (121). This historical approach allows Everett to explore how film journalism plays out larger debates within black communities over political strategies for racial uplift and advancement. In her chapter on the 1930s—at nearly one hundred pages, the central and most intellectually ambitious chapter of the book—Everett details the split in the African-American press between "accomodationist" critics who believed that Hollywood could be persuaded to reform its practices of employment and representation along more progressive lines and "radical" journalists who rejected both dominant filmmaking practices and the capitalist system that fostered them. The advent of sound galvanized and complicated this debate, as evidenced in Everett's analysis of the reception of some early talkies featuring black performers, such as *Hallelujah!* (1929), *Hearts in Dixie* (1930), and *Imitation of Life* (1934).

Here, and throughout the book, Everett's method of carefully reconstructing the political, sociological, and cultural contexts inhabited by the critics from the African-American press yields some surprising historical insights. The first chapter demonstrates the extensive interest in cinema in the black press before the release of *The Birth of a Nation*, the film popularly thought to initiate black activism about the cinema. Everett shows how from the very start of its existence as a mass public medium, movies were understood by African-American critics through a decidedly mixed structure of feeling. Initial hope that the new technology would modify the discriminatory representation and em-

ployment practices associated with the stage became almost immediately reversed by the recognition that early movies did little to depart from the demeaning characterizations of minstrel entertainment. This first chapter records a notable early instance of black activism in relation to the cinema. In 1909, Lester Walton of the *New York Age* wrote a piece condemning New York theaters for promoting films of lynchings. The existence of such promotion is a revelation in itself, and adds an important complication to film historians' understanding of the early cinema's use of sensational content to draw audiences. But equally to the point, Everett shows that Walton's campaign had practical effect. His critique was reprinted and endorsed by the *Motion Picture Herald*, a mainstream trade publication for film exhibitors, whose editors called upon theater owners to stop screening and promoting films of lynching.

A further strength of the book lies in its ongoing demonstration that activism in relation to the cinema in the African-American press encompassed not only the content of films, but production and exhibition practices as well. As Everett points out, black papers routinely covered films in both their news sections and their arts features. In addition to film reviews, one might find news coverage celebrating the achievements of individual black performers or craftworkers in the film industry, along with muckraking exposés of discriminatory ticketing and seating practices at local theaters. Everett is particularly incisive about an often-criticized feature of black press news coverage of motion picture personalities: its unrelentingly celebratory tone. In her analysis, such black press "boosterism" was not unbecoming; rather, it was a "counternarrative strategy" designed to protest mainstream media ridicule or demonization of blacks by foregrounding salient instances of African-American accomplishment.

Returning the Gaze makes a major contribution to our understanding of American film history. Most importantly, it adds to our knowledge of the role that critics for the black press played in fostering public debate about the cinema and its complicated, multivalent effects on race relations. To put it another way, one of the real pleasures of this book lies in its recovery of critical role models from the archives of the black press. From Lester Walton, "America's first mass-culture griot," as Everett terms him, to "Camera Eye," the pseudonymous reviewer for the radical *Harlem Liberator*, to more familiar figures such as Melvin Tolson, Carleton Moss, and Ralph Ellison, Everett reconstructs a longstanding tradition of black public intellectuals who have made the study of cinema their special focus. Admittedly, Everett might have further elaborated how these critics themselves understood the public their work addressed—whether they saw their work as expanding the American cultural public to include African-Americans or as creating an alternative, oppositional cultural public sphere, or something in between. But the fact that we can raise these questions at all is a measure of Everett's achievement in this vital and important study.

Marianne Conroy teaches film and cultural studies at the University of Maryland.

A Spanish Labyrinth

The Films of Pedro Almodóvar

By Mark Allinson. New York: I. B. Tauris, 2001. $22.50.

Mark Allinson's richly detailed and highly informative book-length study of the films of Pedro Almodóvar, *A Spanish Labyrinth*, reflects the kind of enthusiastic admiration for its subject and for cinema in general that recalls those classical film auteur studies of the 60s and 70s. Despite Allinson's claims that "Almodóvar's film output both resists a canonizing rigidity (if anything, it is iconoclastic) and is firmly wedded to its historical, cultural context (123)," much of Allinson's discussion of Almodóvar's twenty-year career seems designed to demonstrate the centrality of Almodóvar's authorship in ways that echo traditional auteur criticism.

Allinson characterizes his work as "an introductory guide for anyone interested in Almodóvar's cinema, whether it be film specialists who want to read about the cultural context of the films, Hispanists who want to read about the films as cinematic texts, or the general film-goer eager simply to read more about Almodóvar" (ix). Such ambitious claims aside, *A Spanish Labyrinth* is too rich and detailed to be considered a mere introduction to Almodóvar. Given the director's international celebrity status and the international commercial success of his films, this is not necessarily a bad thing. Not only does Allinson's treatment of specific tropes of narration, plot set-ups, and common character portrayals presuppose a close working knowledge of all 13 of Almodóvar's films, but the decision to organize the book around a thematic rather than a chronological discussion of the films means that one needs to have a ready grasp of the intricacies of the often labyrinthine plots in order to fully savor Allinson's arguments.

This is not to say that this is a specialists' book either, since many of the observations Allinson makes have been made before in earlier books and essays on the subject. Indeed, Allinson makes frequent use of some of the best criticism of Almodóvar's films in Spanish and English, and adds his own keen insight at various points presenting a valuable synthesis of the critical literature on Almodóvar that complements and expands on elements of the two excellent book-length studies of Almodóvar's cinema that already exist in English: Paul Julian Smith's *Desire Unlimited* (1994, updated 2001) and Kathleen Vernon and Barbara Morris's *Post-Franco, Post-Modern* (1995).

To be sure, there are some splendid chapters here that enable this volume to stand on its own merits, most notably the discussion of visual style in Almodóvar's films, which is a tour-de-force treatment of the dazzling camera work, editing, and extravagant mise-en-scène that have become signature pieces of Almodóvar films. Here, for the first and only time in the book, Allinson makes reference to the evolution of Almodóvar's work, especially in the gradual autodidacticism of his mastery of technique and technology to tell a story cinematically. There is also a highly original chapter on the use of music in the diegesis and soundtrack of

Almodóvar's films in which Allinson identifies various compositions, thus providing useful information for scholars.

Having acknowledged the considerable merits of *A Spanish Labyrinth*, one might also to recognize certain limitations in Allinson's almost taxonomical approach to Almodóvar's cinema. These arise largely from the book's focus on issues of film authorship, which he poses in his introductory chapter, mischievously entitled "Almodóvar—the *Auteur* of a Free Spain." He intends to show that Almodóvar's artistic freedom, irreverence, and in-your-face iconoclasm is aligned with the democratization process of post-Franco Spain over the past two decades. He even throws in the etymology of the name Almodóvar, which derives from the Arabic meaning "place of freedom" or "freeing of slaves" (3). After making a credible argument for Almodóvar's control of nearly every aspect of his films by examining social structures, gender, sexuality, and a variety of formal tropes, he concludes the book by returning to the sense of Almodóvar's canonized authorship, as he argues for the privileged position of Almodóvar as "the embodiment of the new, postmodern Spain" (216).

Unequivocally, for Allinson, Almodóvar *is* Spanish cinema. While providing an obvious coherence to the work, such a treatment ignores the dynamics of the give-and-take of Almodóvar's relation to Spanish cinema's past and present, and thus reveals only a partial view of its subject. The Almodóvar portrayed in these pages, while situated within a specific historical generation that came of age in the late 1970s, after Franco's death, nonetheless seems to populate the Spanish cinematic landscape all by himself with almost no apparent inspiration from either predecessors or contemporaries. Luis García Berlanga, the ensemble filmmaker whom the director often acknowledges as one of his Spanish models, is only mentioned in passing. Iván Zulueta and Eloy de la Iglesia, opposition figures whose cinematic treatment of gender and sexuality at a minimum help ground Almodóvar in Spanish cultural and filmmaking contexts, are never even mentioned. This single-minded focus on his subject, which exaggerates Almodóvar's uniqueness, ironically works against Allinson's own argument by short-circuiting the retelling of one of Almodóvar's most extraordinary achievements: his triumphal move as a young upstart from the margins of a film industry that barely acknowledged his existence during the early years of his career, to its very center. Such a narrative would require some attention to the context of the early post-Franco film scene, which is all but absent here. Discussion of the tradition of Spanish auteurs like Saura and Gutiérrez Aragón is called for, if only to clarify, by contrast, the originality of Almodóvar's brand of authorship. In the early 1980s, as Spanish society was undergoing radical demographic changes and was little interested in movies about the traumatic past, these directors continued to make the same brooding, introspective films that they had made in the seventies. Nor was Almodóvar alone in rejecting the auteurism of Spain's version of the "Cinema of Quality." The early films and works of Fernando Trueba, Bigas Luna, and Eloy de la Iglesia also contributed substantively to that radical transformation of popular Spanish cinema.

At the same time, and intimately involved in the story of the triumph of Almodóvar's cinema, is the subsequent narrative of how the youthful and irreverent generation of the 90s found in the example of his success, the inspiration for their own careers. Indeed, Spanish cinema since the mid-1990s has been heir to the Almodóvar success story; some of them, like Alex de la Iglesia, owe their start to Almodóvar's own production company. The youth audience the industry once considered marginal now represents the principal domestic market of Spanish films. Consideration of this achievement might make Allinson's claim of Almodóvar's authorship of a free Spain a bit more credible.

But even if Allinson wants to limit his narrative focus exclusively to a single career, a book that sets out to position Almodóvar's authorial status within Spanish and transnational cinematic contexts would seem the ideal occasion to move beyond the clichés of auteurism and consider the cultural specificity of Spanish film authorship. The case might be made that the auteur, almost by definition, implies a transnational discourse, and that earlier Spanish auteurs—Bardem, Saura, and Erice most conspicuously—had to negotiate between the national and the transnational as a strategy through which to forge their authorial identities. At home, the films of a number of these international auteurs circulated simply as popular cinema. That was certainly the case for Berlanga, José Luis Borau, and Gutiérrez Aragón, long before Almodóvar began making films. Almodóvar's success abroad makes him unique, but that uniqueness should not be confused with the formula of the popular auteur, a model that has long been a staple of Spanish film culture.

Despite its shortcomings in these matters of Spanish film history, this is an excellent synthesis of recent Almodóvar scholarship. Cutting across the full gamut of the director's work, Allinson shows us persuasively just how the formal elements of Almodóvar's cinema advance the sometimes slippery concept of authorship to produce a series of powerful, entertaining, and ultimately subversive films.

Marvin D'Lugo teaches Spanish-language film at Clark University. He is currently completing a book on the transnational imaginary in Spanish cinema.

A Very Dangerous Citizen

Abraham Lincoln Polonsky and the Hollywood Left

By Paul Buhle and Dave Wagner. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001. $19.95.

In September 1947, 43 members of the Hollywood community were subpoenaed to appear in Washington, D.C. to testify before the House Committee on UnAmerican Activities (HUAC) about Communist subversion of the film industry. Abraham Polonsky was not among them; thus he was never one of the nineteen unfriendly witnesses, whose number was soon reduced to ten, and henceforth known as the Hollywood Ten. Like other blacklistees (e.g., Nedrick Young,

Michael Wilson, Paul Jarrico), Polonsky ended up in the limbo of the lesser Left, eclipsed by such icons as Dalton Trumbo, John Howard Lawson, and Albert Maltz, all of whom have been the subject of critical studies. Buhle and Wagner have successfully restored Polonsky to his rightful place in both film history and American letters, arguing convincingly that Polonsky was a true intellectual. How many screenwriters could admit to having been influenced by Virgil? And how many could claim to have read Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*?

Unfortunately, a knee-jerk response to "Abraham Polonsky" would be "*Force of Evil* (1949)," which he both wrote and directed and which is now part of the film noir canon. But, as Buhle and Wagner have shown, *Force of Evil* is only one piece in the mosaic of his life. While film noir has become a standard course in the cinema studies curriculum, the boxing film has not. Thus *Body and Soul* (1947), brilliantly directed by Robert Rossen from Polonsky's screenplay, is known as a "Robert Rossen film"; or, to admirers of James Wong Howe, as the film whose fight sequences were photographed with Howe and his crew circling the ring on roller skates. Outside of these two movies, one doubts that even film scholars know much more about Polonsky, except perhaps his abiding contempt for informants and his irreverent remarks about Elia Kazan's special Oscar at the 1999 Academy Awards, when Polonsky was quoted as hoping that some extreme anti-Kazan demonstration might enliven an otherwise deadly affair.

In their richly detailed biography, Buhle and Wagner depict a complex personality—a man of letters, a unionist, and, eventually, a Hollywood latecomer. Too much of an individual to be pigeonholed, Polonsky adhered to no line, party or otherwise. He may have insisted he was a Marxist, but all that meant was that his writing had a political slant, not an ideological subtext.

The Bronx-born Polonsky grew up in a household where great literature was prized, and storytelling was a way to expand the boundaries of the imagination. It is not surprising that in high school Polonsky excelled in English and won prizes for his essays. Nor was his decision to enroll in City College, which, in the 1930s, was New York's intellectual crucible. There, literature and politics were not the antagonists they later became to the Stalinist left. At City College, Polonsky dabbled in poetry, fiction, and satire. Untouched by radicalism, Polonsky was far from being a Victorian aesthete. However, the Great Depression, labor unrest, and the rise of fascism were his refining fire, as they were too countless others who envisioned a utopia that might loosely be termed a socialist America.

Still, Polonsky was drawn to the white-collar world, and after receiving his law degree, he found himself in the sphere of popular entertainment. When Gertrude Berg, the creator and writer of *The Goldbergs*, one of America's most popular radio programs of the 1930s, wanted advice about a courtroom scene for one of the episodes, she sought out Polonsky. His association with Berg led to a brief stint in Hollywood in 1937 that left him unimpressed. Polonsky preferred working in radio in New York. When World War II broke out, he became an OSS operative. His wartime experience attracted the attention of Paramount; although the documentary the studio planned never materialized, Polonsky was now a member of the Hollywood community.

Even so, Polonsky can never be said to have "gone Hollywood." Although his body of work is not large, it is impressive. *Body and Soul* and *Force of Evil* are not his sole achievements. *I Can Get It for You Wholesale* (1951) is an amazingly feminist film for its time, with Susan Hayward delivering a diatribe against male chauvinism that would have sounded fresh in the heyday of *Ms.* magazine. *Tell Them Willy Boy Is Here* (1969) deserves a place among social consciousness films, despite a didacticism characteristic of the genre. One wishes that Polonsky had been the sole screenwriter of *Golden Earrings* (1947); then perhaps audiences would have learned the fate of the Gypsies in the Holocaust. Instead, the Gypsies came off as free spirits and Marlene Dietrich as an earth mother in need of a shampoo. But Gypsies were not high concept in 1947; the best outlet Polonsky could find for his critique of capitalism (and its dark side, fascism) was *Body and Soul* and *Force of Evil*.

A Very Dangerous Citizen is a work of love, and one that is superbly documented with an impressive array of notes that are like links on a website, connecting the reader with sources he or she may not have known. Buhle and Wagner have rehabilitated a screenwriter-novelist-essayist, who, had the times been more propitious, might have been in the vanguard of screen reform, along with the myriad whose voices were silenced and careers were aborted by the blacklist.

In his *Essay on Criticism*, Pope claimed that perfection is impossible in a written work. Although Buhle and Wagner come close to perfection, there are a few errata. If Pope could pardon Homer for his inconsistencies, one should not overreact to the authors' statement (4) that *These Three* (1936) was "the first sympathetic lesbian film . . . later remade as *The Children's Hour*." Lillian Hellman's play, *The Children's Hour* (1934), dealt with a child accusing her teachers of enjoying a lesbian relationship. When Hellman reworked her play as *These Three*, the teachers were instead accused of being intimate with the same man. In 1962, *The Children's Hour* was filmed pretty much as Hellman had written it, with the accusation unchanged. The villain of *Act of Violence* (1949) is Van Heflin, not Van Johnson (87). *None but the Lonely Heart* (1944) was not Clifford Odets's sole directorial effort (128); he also directed *The Story on Page One* (1959), in which Rita Hayworth gave a stellar performance, as did Sanford Meisner as an overbearing attorney.

These minor errors aside, *A Very Dangerous Citizen* is a major work of scholarship, integrating criticism, biography, cultural history, archival research, and personal interviews into a vivid portrait of the Hollywood Left and one of its overlooked representatives, who has finally received his due.

Bernard F. Dick teaches English and film at Fairleigh Dickinson University, Teaneck, New Jersey.

Book Notes

Contributors to Book Notes: **Bernard F. Dick** is Professor of Communication and English at Fairleigh Dickinson University; **Noah Isenberg** teaches German and film studies at Wesleyan University; **Tony Williams** teaches in the English Department at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

Ciment, Michel. *Kubrick: The Definitive Edition*. New York: Faber and Faber, 2001. $35.00. The subtitle of this book is both affirmative and poignant, the former in being an update of Ciment's thoughtful first edition, and the latter in sadly registering the fact that its subject is no longer with us. Ciment supplements his earlier stimulating observations and superb photo illustrations with new material relating to the last two Kubrick films, *Full Metal Jacket* and *Eyes Wide Shut*. The new edition also contains further supplementary interviews with other Kubrick collaborators such as assistant Andrew Birkin, production designer Les Tomkins, costume designer Marit Allen, scenarists Diane Johnson, Michael Herr, and Frederic Raphael, as well as performers Malcolm McDowell, Jack Nicholson, Marisa Berenson, and Shelley Duvall. It concludes with a touching memorial to Kubrick and an updated filmography and bibliography.

Ciment's explorations of *Full Metal Jacket* and *Eyes Wide Shut* are as inspiring as his observations in the first edition, making this text an indispensable tool for any serious student of the director's work. He suggestively traces the Freudian and dark post-Enlightenment overtures contained within *Eyes Wide Shut*, which, like his other films, was either critically misunderstood or ignored by reviewers unwilling to confront such a challenging work. Like the films themselves, Ciment's comments here are not meant to be definitively dogmatic. Instead, they suggest directions for quite a number of creative approaches. However, the major flaw of this new edition involves the selection of frame enlargements from certain scenes from *2001*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Barry Lyndon*, and *The Shining*, which have suffered drastic color deterioration. Although Ciment followed Kubrick's request to use frame enlargements rather than set photographic stills for his later work, the poor quality of these reproductions does a disservice to the director's legacy.

Tony Williams

Morton, Lisa. *The Cinema of Tsui Hark*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2001. $45.00. This is the first book-study of the director's films in English and as such, it is a worthwhile introduction, containing a brief biography, critical overview, interview, and analysis of his various film projects (which often conclude with some informative comments by the director himself). Morton describes Hark as "born with neurons that fire faster than yours or mine" (17), a filmmaker familiar with literature, films, graphic novels, computerized technology, and convinced of the superiority of Japanese *manga* over American comic books, which he describes as "too graphic, too busy, too much talk" (19). Morton's book contains an in-depth analysis of the director's films, beginning with *The Butterfly Murders* (1979) and finishing with *Time and Tide* (2000) which appeared as the book went into print. The concluding chapter deals with Hark's non-film projects such as television, appearances in filmed interviews, commercials, and comic books.

Morton applauds Hark's tendency to fly in the face of convention by casting women in leading roles and by often choosing "a female character to represent himself in the story" (6). Her analysis is both an accessible introduction to Hark's work for beginners as well as one providing material for future debates. But a problem arises in her tendency to include virtually every film in which Hark was involved in a capacity other than director or producer, where it is difficult to discern his influence. Granted that Hark is known as "the Roger Corman of Hong Kong Cinema," Morton's blanket definition of his all-encompassing roles, especially in some debatable choices for inclusion in "Major Films" and "Other Films," is still problematic. More rigid definitions of authorship are needed here. However, despite these reservations, Lisa Morton's book is a valuable introduction to the films of Tsui Hark and it is indispensable for any future studies.

Tony Williams

Rhodes, Gary D. *White Zombie: Anatomy of a Horror Film*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2001. $65.00. This book might be humorously referred to as "Everything you need to know about *White Zombie* and more besides." But more seriously, this text represents one of the most important contributions that this publisher often provides to the academic world by making available products which more commercially minded institutions would not deem marketable despite their merits. The author aims to pursue "an exhaustive historical account of the film within a theoretical framework which decodes meaning from the empirical data gathered" (5), in order to cover its chosen subject from all possible levels. In this sense, the book is not only an "anatomy" but also an "archaeology," since it approaches *White Zombie* not only from familiar theoretical angles involving issues of spectatorship, reader-reception, and industrial context, but also with the help of detailed empirical data concerning literary and cinematic predecessors as well as contemporary evidence concerning exhibition and publicity practices.

Rhodes provides a fascinating wealth of thoroughly researched evidence citing past and present criticism concerning a film he feels to have been relegated to the margins of film scholarship on all levels. The book not only reveals a professional familiarity with the work of scholars such as David Bordwell, Harry Benshoff, John Ellis, and Judith Mayne, but also reconstructs the complicated career of *White Zombie*'s director Victor Halperin and his role within contemporary American independent film production. This meticulously documented 352-page work (it contains at least 16 appendices) may appear over-abundant for most tastes, but it is invaluable in terms of its detailed research, which not only covers relevant issues of text and contexts but also the film's reproduction on 16mm, laserdisc, and DVD.

Tony Williams

Siodmak, Curt. *Wolf Man's Maker: Memoir of a Hollywood Writer*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2001. $45.00. This revised and expanded edition of Curt Siodmak's originally (1997) self-published memoir, *Even a Man Who Is Pure in Heart* (which, like the current edition, takes its title from one of Siodmak's most memorable screenplays), stands as the final product of Siodmak's illustrious, well over 50-year career as a screenwriter, novelist, and director. Like many of his German and Austrian-born contemporaries—among them Billy Wilder, Fred Zinnemann, Edgar G. Ulmer, and Eugen Schuefftan—Siodmak got his start in Weimar Berlin, in a by now legendary collaboration with them on what came to be known as *Menschen am Sonntag* (*People on Sunday*, 1930).

Siodmak's memoir leads us on a meandering tour from Berlin and Paris of the 1920s and early 30s on to London, where, during the first years after Hitler's ascent to power he continued his writing career (and where the "K" from his original German name "Kurt" was quickly jettisoned, and replaced with the more anglicized "Curt"), and finally, from 1937 onward, to Hollywood. Early in his chronicle, Siodmak makes the general claim that "The human race is a story-telling breed" (4). During the next 400 or so pages it becomes abundantly clear how fundamental this statement is in relation to his own life and career, both of which take their cues from the experiences he encounters and, on occasion, reworks into his writing. Much time is spent on anecdotal bits and pieces—some of them more self-aggrandizing than others—from his colorful life: on his engagement with the Office of Strategic Services during the war; on the recurrent tensions between him and his more famous brother; on sexuality and creativity. Numerous luminaries from the larger émigré scene of Hollywood in the 1940s, including Fritz Lang, Marlene Dietrich, Salka Viertel, and Seymour Nebenzahl, even a so-called "Berliner Club," make cameo appearances in the stories Siodmak tells. And like so many of the tales that his fellow refugees were known to spin, Siodmak's memoir contains its share of piquant embellishment, which does not necessarily detract from the value of his chronicle. Even Siodmak himself seems aware of the unreliability of his narrating self, asking at one point, with the dead-pan bluntness of a noir voiceover: "How far can we trust our memories? Do we deliberately forget unpleasant recollections in order to overload our brain?" Indeed, he responds to these questions with words that might be seen to encapsulate the spirit of his entire life and work: "Many memories stay with us forever, despite our wish to block them out. Those indelible moments torture us to the end of our days" (74).

Noah Isenberg

Solomon, Jon. *The Ancient World in the Cinema*. Revised and expanded. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001. $40.00 cloth; $22.50 paper. In the years following the 1978 publication of *The Ancient World in Cinema*, interest in both antiquity and films about it (see the recent phenomenal success of *Gladiator*) has grown sufficiently to merit a revision. This wide-ranging survey may overwhelm some by its breadth and alienate others by its colloquialisms. Lovers of film-crit jargon, beware: Solomon is not into diegesis; he can be glib, sometimes smart-alecky. But he is always readable.

One of the values of the book is the documentation of the archaeological and iconographic accuracy of many of the films that critics have dismissed as lowbrow spectacles, history gift-wrapped for mass consumption. While it has been fashionable to sneer at Cecil B.DeMille's biblical epics, Solomon points out that *Samson and Delilah* (1949) proves that DeMille's researchers did their homework, right down to providing Minoan and Sumerian motifs for the temple of Dagon. Solomon often illustrates a film's accuracy by juxtaposing production stills with artifacts such as jewelry, reliefs, portraits, and vase paintings, allowing the reader to see the similarities between the film's costumes and settings and antiquity's equivalents. Although Solomon is a classicist, it is in the section on biblical films that he is at his best. His recounting of the production history of DeMille's remake of *The Ten Commandments* (1956) is admirable, and his comparison of the crucifixion sequences in *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1973) and *Godspell* (1973) illuminates the difference between these two film versions of popular rock operas: the former has a disquieting theology ("God, Thy will is hard/But you hold every card"); the latter has no theology at all. I shall consult this revised edition whenever Triton blows his wreathèd horn on the tube.

Bernard F. Dick

To the Editor

Although I very much appreciate Martha P. Nochimson's thoughtful and (mainly) favorable review of my book *Movie Wars* (vol. 55, no. 4, Summer 2002), I'd like to take issue with one sentence in her penultimate paragraph, concerning the eighth chapter, which I feel comes close to reversing its argument. After correctly noting my contention that "national cinema . . . expresses something of the soul of the nation that it comes from," Nochimson incorrectly concludes that I think *Starship Troopers* falls into that category better than *The Phantom Menace*, when in fact I claim the opposite: "By virtue of coming more from an American individual than either *Starship Troopers* or *Independence Day*, *Star Wars I—The Phantom Menace* surely qualifies as being more American in this respect, if only because its auteur has more power and independence"—although I go on to suggest that this condition "may serve as a commercial [and artistic] disadvantage." I add that George Lucas's film "could be called every bit as American as those of John Ford and Howard Hawks," whereas *Starship Troopers*, a film I find more interesting in other respects, "is American in the same way—and to the same degree—that French fries are French." This is a far cry from saying that "Lucas . . . is less acute than [Paul] Verhoeven in expressing 'the soul of America,'" which is Nochimson's version of my argument.

Yours faithfully,

Jonathan Rosenbaum

ABSTRACTS FOR FQ 56-1

Mark Rappaport, The Autobiography of Pier Paolo Pasolini

The Autobiography of Pier Paolo Pasolini re-examines *Porcile*, one of Pasolini's least well-received films, in light of his own comments about and obvious affection for the work and in relation to his better-known films *Teorema* and *Salò*. The seeming opacity of the film is clarified by reading it as a parable not only about transgressions in closed societies but also, more specifically, about homosexuality, a subject that Pasolini, although he made no bones about his sexual orientation in real life, never fully explored in his films.

Akira Mizuta Lippit, The Death of an Animal

This essay looks at the representation of animal death in cinema, beginning with some of the earliest recorded killings of animals, such as Thomas Edison's *Electrocuting an Elephant* (1903), to contemporary feature films and documentaries that depict scenes of violence toward animals. At stake in this essay is a challenge to the philosophical axiom that animals cannot die: that because animals lack language, they are incapable of knowing death, and thus of experiencing it as such. In cinema, the paradox takes on an added complexity, which arises from the nature of visual representation and photographic media. If animals do not die, then why do so many animals appear to die in films? Why do so many (important) films feature the slaughter of animals? What is the relationship between animal death and film?

Andrew Horton, Laughter Dark & Joyous in Recent Films from the Former Yugoslavia

Studying recent films from the former republics of Yugoslavia, Andrew Horton examines how filmmakers depict important issues and themes of the times through humor. Focusing particularly on Goran Paskaljevic's award-winning *Cabaret Balkan* (1998), which is set in Belgrade during the Bosnian War and weaves a variety of narratives "framed" within a cabaret, Horton places these recent films in a larger context of Yugoslav culture. He draws connections between Balkan comedy and a Yugoslav tradition of satirical theater and poetry, where humor—particularly laughter, dark and joyous—is used to illustrate pressing social and political issues.

Scott Repass, Being John Malkovich (film review)

In *Being John Malkovich*, Craig Schwartz discovers a portal that allows him to "be" John Malkovich for 15 minutes, thus opening a "metaphysical can of worms." The worms discussed in this articles include identity issues raised by the characters' abilities to change bodies, the film's play on the contrast between person and public persona, and director Spike Jonze's "first person" representation of the experience of entering Malkovich. Jonze and writer Charlie Kaufman also raise questions about the role of gender identity and the differences between humans and animals and animals and puppets.

Martha P. Nochimson, Mulholland Drive (film review)

But what does David Lynch really think of Hollywood? *Mulholland Drive* reveals both his passionate, radiant belief in the rich possibilities of American popular culture and his dark insight into its capacity to destroy its best and brightest. Everything hinges on one moment in which the destinies of seemingly disparate people join in an irreversible trajectory. Double identities, shifts in time and space, music, and the fertile darkness of the unknown all serve as elements by means of which Lynch conveys his vision.